



ED001 1 DON - Attendance

Introduction

This policy has been written with regard to Working Together to Improve School Attendance, the Children Missing Education statutory guidance and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Esland Doncaster School recognises that many pupils may have experienced disrupted education or difficulties in previous settings, including social, emotional, medical and environmental factors that can affect attendance.

Attendance is a key indicator of pupils' sense of safety, belonging and inclusion. The school is committed to creating a calm, supportive and inclusive environment where pupils feel able and motivated to attend regularly and engage meaningfully in learning.

Principles & Aims

- Promote regular attendance and punctuality through inclusive, whole-school practice.
- Maintain accurate attendance registers in line with statutory requirements.
- Identify barriers to attendance early and provide timely, proportionate support.
- Work collaboratively with parents/carers, placing Local Authorities, social workers and relevant agencies.
- Treat attendance as a safeguarding priority and part of the school's wider pastoral systems.

Attendance and SEND/EHCP Pupils

Attendance arrangements for pupils with SEND and/or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are individualised and aligned with agreed outcomes. The school will make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010 to reduce barriers to attendance.

Adjustments may include graduated start times, therapeutic integration, sensory regulation support or reintegration plans. These arrangements are regularly reviewed and recorded.

Part-Time Timetables

Any part-time timetable is exceptional, time-limited and used only where it is in the pupil's best interests.

Arrangements are agreed in writing with parents/carers and the placing authority where appropriate, include clear review dates, and have the explicit aim of returning the pupil to full-time education as soon as possible.

Roles & Responsibilities

School Staff

Suite 1 & 5, Riverside Business Centre, Foundry Lane, Belper, DE56 0RN

v5 Last Reviewed: Rachael Allen (Chief Operating Officer) Mon Sep 21 2026

Next Review: Headteacher Thu Sep 30 2027

Teachers are responsible for accurate completion of class registers. The School Administrator will complete first-day calling and record outcomes. Senior leaders monitor attendance data, identify patterns and oversee interventions.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually. Any absence must be reported to the school without delay and supported with evidence where requested.

Governance

The Education Director and Headteacher are responsible for monitoring attendance levels, assessing the effectiveness of interventions, and ensuring statutory compliance. Governors will have oversight and monitor strategies to support good attendance. They provide appropriate challenge and support and monitor the impact of strategies.

Monitoring, Analysis & Review

At Doncaster Esland School, we maintain high expectations for attendance and aspire for pupils to achieve attendance of 95% or above. We acknowledge, however, that individual needs and changing circumstances may affect attendance levels, and these are considered on a case-by-case basis. Attendance is therefore monitored closely, with emerging concerns addressed promptly through supportive, proportionate interventions.

Attendance is monitored daily and reviewed weekly at operational level. Data is analysed half-termly by senior leaders to identify trends over time, differences between cohorts and the impact of interventions.

Findings inform strategic planning and are reported to governance. Where attendance approaches or falls below 90%, concerns will be discussed with the relevant Education Welfare Service and the placing Local Authority as appropriate. Governors provide support and challenge via regular monitoring.

Attendance & Safeguarding

Poor or deteriorating attendance is treated as a potential safeguarding indicator and considered alongside behaviour, welfare and mental health information. Unexplained absence triggers first-day calling and escalation in line with safeguarding procedures.

Registration & Record Keeping

Poor or deteriorating attendance is treated as a potential safeguarding indicator and considered alongside behaviour, welfare and mental health information. Unexplained absence triggers first-day calling and escalation in line with safeguarding procedures.

Pupil & Family Voice

The school actively seeks pupil and family views to understand barriers to attendance. Where appropriate, pupil voice informs support planning and review meetings. Families are engaged early and collaboratively before formal escalation wherever possible.

Absence Reporting

Parents/carers must telephone the school by 9:00am on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day unless otherwise agreed.

Registration times for all pupils

AM Registration: 9.00 am – 9.30 am

PM Registration: 12.50 pm – 1.00 pm

First-Day Response to Unexpected and Unexplained Absence

The school operates a first-day response to all unexpected and unexplained pupil absences. Registration takes place between 9:00am and 9:30am. Where a pupil has not attended and no reason for absence has been received, the school administrator will make contact with the parent/carer as soon as practicable following the close of registration.

Where contact cannot be established, the school will make further reasonable enquiries, including contacting other available emergency contacts where appropriate.

By approximately 1 0:00am, unexplained absences will be reviewed by the attendance lead and, where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and/or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) taking account of the pupil's individual needs, vulnerabilities, attendance history and any known safeguarding or welfare concerns.

Where an unexpected absence remains unexplained and the school has been unable to establish contact with the parent/carer or an appropriate emergency contact, the school will normally seek to undertake a same-day welfare check/home visit by approximately 1 0:30am–1 1 :00am.

This is an operational timescale rather than a statutory waiting period. Where the circumstances indicate a safeguarding concern, the school will act earlier and will not wait until the above timescale.

The school will record all attempts to establish the reason for absence and the outcome of any welfare check. Where the school has reason to believe that a pupil is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, the DSL will follow the school's safeguarding procedures and make a referral to children's social care and/or the police where appropriate.

The school's procedures recognise that pupils attending a special school may have individual vulnerabilities and communication, medical or care needs. The response to an unexplained absence will therefore be proportionate to the individual circumstances and level of risk.

If a child is suffering from illness:

From Day 4 of illness-related absence, medical evidence may be requested. Where a pupil accumulates 1 5 school days of illness absence within an academic year, a review meeting will be arranged with parents/carers and relevant professionals.

Term-time Leave

Parents/carers do not have an automatic right to term-time leave. Requests must be made in writing in advance and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Failure to return a pupil to school on the agreed date may result in the pupil being reported as a Child Missing Education to the placing authority. Amendments to regulations make clear that Headteachers may only authorise term-time leave in exceptional circumstances. Holidays during term time disrupt learning and negatively impact progress. The school year consists of 190 days, leaving 175 days for family holidays.

Child Missing Education

Esland Doncaster School will follow statutory Child Missing Education procedures. Any unexplained or prolonged absence will be treated as a safeguarding concern. The school will notify the placing Local Authority when a pupil is removed from roll, in line with statutory guidance and local protocols.

Appendix 1 - Request for Term-time Leave

I wish to apply for term-time leave for my child:

Name:

Class:

Dates requested:

Exceptional reasons for this request:

Signature (Parent/Carer):

Date:

Appendix 2 - Approval Letter

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thank you for your request for term-time leave. I am satisfied that this request meets the criteria for exceptional circumstances and have authorised the leave detailed below.

Dates authorised:

Please ensure your child returns to school on the agreed date.

Signed (Headteacher)

Date:

Appendix 3 – Refusal Letter

Dear Parent/Carer,

Your request for term-time leave has been carefully considered but cannot be authorised as it does not meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances.

If leave is taken, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may be referred to Doncaster Council for further action.

Signed (Headteacher)

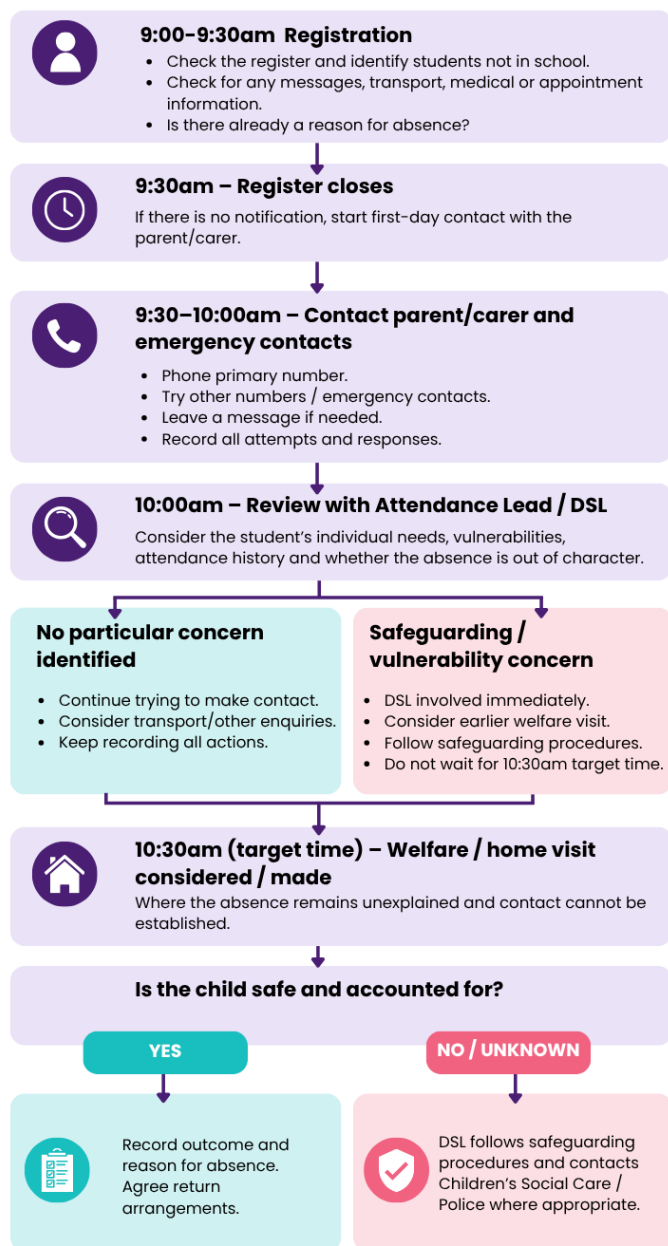
Date:

Appendix 4 – First Day Calling and Escalation Procedure

First day absence & welfare check

What to do when a student is not in school

Registration: 9:00–9:30am | A prompt and proportionate response keeps our students safe.



Key guidance

This procedure is based on the DfE's Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026) and Children missing education statutory guidance.

- Schools must contact parents on the first day of absence where no reason has been provided.
- Unexplained absences should be promptly followed up and enquiries made to establish the child's whereabouts.
- Where there is a safeguarding concern, action should be taken without delay.
- The DfE does not prescribe a specific time for a home visit. This is a school operational decision, based on individual circumstances and risk.



DO NOT WAIT UNTIL 10:30AM IF THERE IS A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN.

Consider earlier welfare enquiries where the student has complex medical needs, limited communication, a history of going missing, known safeguarding concerns, or the absence is significantly out of character.



SEN-specific red flags

Consider same-morning welfare check earlier than 10:30am where the student:

- has complex medical needs
- has limited or no verbal communication
- cannot reliably communicate that they are safe
- is dependant on an adult for care
- has a history of going missing
- has known safeguarding concerns
- is subject to a child protection plan
- is looked after or otherwise particularly vulnerable
- normally has very high attendance
- normally travels by school transport and has unexpectedly not arrived
- has recently experienced significant family change or trauma
- has previously had unexplained absences
- or where staff simply have a reasonable concern that something may be wrong



Record your actions

Include in your attendance system:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ No notification received | ☐ DSL informed |
| ☐ Parent/carer contacted | ☐ Welfare/home visit |
| ☐ Message left | ☐ Child seen and safe |
| ☐ Second contact attempted | ☐ Reason for absence |
| ☐ Emergency contact attempted | ☐ Further safeguarding action required |
| ☐ Attendance lead informed | |

Student: Date:

Time of first contact

Time of DSL review

Time of home visit

Outcome.....

Further action.....

Staff initials.....