

Dunvant Primary School

Attendance, Belonging and Engagement Policy 2026–2027

Status: Statutory School Policy

Date adopted: Autumn 2026

Review date: Autumn 2027

Responsible Officer: Headteacher

Governor Committee: Standards, Wellbeing and Inclusion Committee

1. Policy Vision

At Dunvant Primary School, we believe that every child has the right to belong, participate and achieve. Regular attendance supports learning, wellbeing, friendship, personal development and safeguarding.

Our approach reflects the vision of an excellent education for all by working together, whilst recognising that attendance difficulties are often linked to barriers that require understanding, support and partnership. The school is committed to ensuring that every learner feels welcomed, valued, heard and included within our school community.

We recognise that attendance is not simply about presence in school. Attendance is closely connected to wellbeing, inclusion, engagement and learner progress.

In line with Curriculum for Wales, we seek to develop:

- Ambitious, capable learners
 - Enterprising, creative contributors
 - Ethical, informed citizens
 - Healthy, confident individuals
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2. Legislative and Policy Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Education Act 1996

- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018
 - Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021
 - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
 - Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
 - Welsh Government Attendance and Absence Guidance
 - Keeping Learners Safe (Welsh Government)
 - Swansea Council Attendance Policy 2023 and associated guidance. [\[Final Swan...2327 \(002\) | Word\]](#), [\[democracy....sea.gov.uk\]](#)
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3. Principles

The school's approach is based on the following principles:

Belonging

Children are more likely to attend regularly when they feel that they belong within their school community.

Relationships

Positive, trusting relationships between school, families and learners underpin good attendance.

Early Intervention

Concerns should be identified and addressed before attendance patterns become entrenched.

Inclusion

Attendance difficulties are often linked to wider additional learning, wellbeing, family or safeguarding needs.

Safeguarding

Attendance monitoring forms a critical part of safeguarding arrangements.

Partnership

Improving attendance is a shared responsibility between learners, parents, school staff, governors, the Local Authority and partner agencies.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- Monitor whole-school attendance information.
 - Receive termly attendance reports.
 - Ensure compliance with statutory requirements.
 - Review attendance procedures annually.
 - Promote a culture of high expectation and inclusion.
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Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Provide strategic leadership for attendance.
 - Ensure effective attendance procedures are implemented.
 - Maintain strong working relationships with the Education Welfare Service.
 - Ensure attendance forms part of school improvement planning.
 - Report attendance information to governors.
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Attendance Lead

The Attendance Lead will:

- Monitor attendance daily.
 - Identify emerging concerns.
 - Coordinate attendance interventions.
 - Liaise with families.
 - Maintain accurate attendance records.
 - Work alongside external agencies.
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Staff

All staff will:

- Promote positive attendance messages.

- Build trusting relationships with learners.
 - Encourage participation and engagement.
 - Monitor wellbeing concerns.
 - Share attendance information promptly with leaders.
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Parents and Carers

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives a suitable education.

Parents and carers should:

- Ensure children attend school regularly.
 - Notify school promptly regarding absences.
 - Attend meetings arranged by school.
 - Work collaboratively with support plans.
 - Avoid booking holidays during term time unless exceptional circumstances apply.
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Learners

Learners will be encouraged to:

- Attend every day when well enough to do so.
 - Arrive punctually.
 - Speak to trusted adults if worried.
 - Participate in support plans designed to improve attendance.
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5. Promoting Good Attendance

Dunvant Primary School will promote attendance through:

- A welcoming and inclusive ethos.
- Strong transition arrangements.
- Positive relationships with families.
- High-quality teaching and learning.
- Learner voice opportunities.
- Effective family engagement.
- Celebration of improvement and effort.
- Strong support for wellbeing and mental health.

The school will avoid approaches that create anxiety or stigma around attendance.

6. Safeguarding

Attendance is everyone's safeguarding responsibility.

Persistent absence, sudden changes in attendance or unexplained absences may indicate:

- Emotional wellbeing difficulties.
- Bullying.
- Additional Learning Needs.
- Family difficulties.
- Poverty-related barriers.
- Child protection concerns.
- Exploitation risks.
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).

The school will investigate unexplained absence promptly and will follow safeguarding procedures where concerns arise.

7. First Day Contact

The school will:

- Monitor attendance registers daily.
- Contact parents/carers where a child is absent and no explanation has been received.
- Record all communication regarding absence.
- Escalate concerns where safeguarding risks are identified.

Where concerns remain unresolved, additional welfare checks may be considered in line with safeguarding procedures.

8. Understanding Attendance Barriers

The school recognises that attendance concerns may arise from:

- Health needs
- Mental health and wellbeing concerns

- Anxiety
- EBSA
- Additional Learning Needs
- Family circumstances
- Housing difficulties
- Poverty
- Bereavement
- Bullying
- Friendship concerns
- Neurodiversity
- Transitions

Where difficulties arise, the school will seek to understand the reasons before considering formal attendance action.

9. Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Dunvant Primary School recognises the increasing significance of EBSA.

Where attendance difficulties are linked to anxiety or emotional wellbeing, support will focus upon:

- Building trust and relationships.
- Listening to learner voice.
- Working collaboratively with home.
- Addressing barriers to belonging.
- Individual support planning.
- Graduated reintegration approaches where appropriate.
- Accessing specialist support when required.

A punitive approach will not be used where anxiety is identified as the primary barrier to attendance.

10. Graduated Attendance Support Pathway

Universal Support

For all learners:

- Positive attendance culture.
- Regular communication.
- Wellbeing support.
- High expectations.

Targeted Support

Where concerns emerge:

- Attendance monitoring.
- Parent meetings.
- Family support.
- Individual attendance plans.
- Pastoral support.

Intensive Support

Where concerns persist:

- Multi-agency meetings.
- Education Welfare Service involvement.
- Early Help support.
- Additional Learning Needs review.
- Safeguarding assessment where appropriate.

11. Additional Learning Needs and Equality

The school recognises that some groups of learners can face increased attendance challenges.

Attendance information will be reviewed carefully to ensure equitable outcomes for:

- Learners with ALN.
- Care-experienced learners.
- Learners experiencing poverty.
- Young carers.
- Learners with medical conditions.
- Learners with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered where appropriate.

12. Term-Time Holidays

Parents should request leave of absence in advance.

The Headteacher will consider requests individually, taking account of:

- Educational impact.
- Learner attendance history.
- Family circumstances.
- Welsh Government and Swansea Council guidance.

Unauthorised absences may be referred to the Education Welfare Service where appropriate.

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13. Attendance Monitoring

Attendance data will be monitored:

- Daily by attendance staff.
- Half-termly by senior leaders.
- Termly by governors.
- Annually as part of self-evaluation.

The school will analyse:

- Whole-school attendance.
- Attendance by year group.
- Persistent absence.
- Attendance of vulnerable groups.
- Impact of interventions.

Analysis will support school improvement planning and learner wellbeing.

14. Curriculum for Wales and Attendance

Attendance supports the Four Purposes by enabling learners to:

Ambitious, Capable Learners

Regular engagement in learning supports progression across all Areas of Learning and Experience.

Enterprising, Creative Contributors

Attendance enables participation in collaborative learning and enrichment experiences.

Ethical, Informed Citizens

Regular attendance strengthens belonging, relationships and participation in school life.

Healthy, Confident Individuals

Attendance supports wellbeing, resilience, confidence and positive routines.

15. Welsh Language, Cynefin and Community

As a community-focused school, Dunvant Primary promotes a strong sense of:

- Cynefin
- Welsh identity
- Community engagement
- Family partnership
- Learner voice

We recognise that children attend more successfully when they feel connected to their school, community and place.

16. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by:

- Headteacher
- Attendance Lead

- Governing Body

Review will consider:

- Attendance trends.
 - Learner voice.
 - Parent feedback.
 - Local Authority guidance.
 - Welsh Government developments.
 - Estyn expectations.
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Appendix 1: Attendance Expectations

Dunvant Primary School expects every learner to:

- Attend whenever they are well enough to do so.
- Arrive on time.
- Participate fully in learning.
- Seek support when difficulties arise.

The school's core message is:

"Every day matters. Every learner belongs. Every learner can succeed."

Alignment with the Five Principles of School Improvement (Welsh Government)

This policy contributes to:

1. High aspirations and expectations for all learners.
2. Strong support for learner wellbeing.
3. High-quality teaching and learning.
4. Effective leadership and collaboration.
5. Self-improving schools focused on continuous improvement.

This wording should give Dunvant Primary a policy that feels current for 2026, is aligned to Swansea LA expectations, Curriculum for Wales, wellbeing and inclusion priorities, and would stand up well under Estyn scrutiny.