

MOSS PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

Date Updated	26/5/2017
Policy Written By	S Nunwick (Headteacher) and scrutinised by the Pupil Welfare, Curriculum and Standards committee
Date Approved by Governors	26/6/17
Date of Next Review	April 2019 or subject to changes in legislation/DFE guidance
Responsible Committee	Pupil Welfare, Curriculum and Standards
Signed by Chair of Governors	<i>C Cunningham</i>

1. Introduction

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised (permission given by the Head teacher) or unauthorised (permission not given).

2. Aims of the policy

- To ensure that all learners attend school well
- To ensure that all learners are punctual
- To win the support of parents in ensuring that their children attend school well and that they arrive on time
- To keep good records of attendance through the school registers and to take prompt action to follow up absences
- To investigate and act immediately where truancy is suspected or confirmed
- To work effectively with the LA and other agencies to follow up attendance issues promptly and effectively
- To monitor closely pupils with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents and where appropriate other agencies to bring about improvement.

3. Definitions

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. The Head teacher may not, in some circumstances, accept the reason given for the absence and will record it as unauthorised. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.
- Absences that will not be authorised include those that have not been explained within X days
- Persistent Absenteeism: this is recorded when a child's attendance falls below 90%

4. Positive measures to encourage good attendance

- Registers will be completed accurately at the start of each day (school begins at 8.50am and the register is taken by 8.55am. Children arriving after 9.00am are late and will receive a Late Mark)
- Daily monitoring by class teachers and school administration staff to raise concerns where appropriate
- Regular monitoring by Head teacher of attendance and punctuality and texts/letters home following this monitoring
- Informing parents that they should bring child into school if they have an appointment later that day so that their child can receive their registration mark
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions and trained staff to administer some medicines in school
- Regular monitoring by Education Welfare Officer of attendance and punctuality
- Involvement of the Educational Welfare Officer if a child's attendance falls below 90%
- Certificates for good attendance (Bronze 97%+, Silver 98%+, Gold 99%+, Platinum 100%) each term

- Certificates for significant improvement in a pupil's attendance
- £10 Gift Vouchers for pupils who have maintained 100% attendance at the end of the year
- Weekly Class Attendance Champions Trophy (a short reward activity for the winners)
- Each time a class wins the weekly trophy, they will receive a nominal £10 to go towards a special activity, chosen by them, at the end of the year

5. Punctuality/Lateness

We place a great deal of importance on the need to be punctual and to arrive in school on time. Not only does this make for a good start to the day but it shows consideration for everyone else in the class and avoids repetition of instructions and teaching. We open the gates to the playground at 8.40am each morning, which is supervised by a teacher or senior leader each day. This allows parents to drop their children off safely before taking younger children round to the Infant School. The Site Manager shuts the gate after the last class has entered school and directs late arrivals to the school office. All children who arrive in school after the main body of the class have entered school at 8.50am must enter through the main office and write in the 'late after gate' book. Those who have not arrived in time for registration at 8.55am will receive a late mark. Those who arrive at school after 9.30am will be given a U code.

6. Medical Appointments

Where a child misses more than half the morning or afternoon because of a medical appointment this will be recorded as an absence in the register. Where a child does not return to school, following an early medical appointment, the following school session may be recorded as unauthorised. Pupils should come into school before attending morning appointments and always return to school directly after an appointment, even if this for part of the day. This minimises lost learning time.

7. Responding to non-attendance and the procedure for lateness

- If no note or telephone call is received from parents, the school will contact the parent by telephone
- If we are unable to contact parents, or if there is continued non-attendance or lateness, the Education Welfare Officer will be alerted by the Head teacher and a letter will be sent or/and a home visit will be carried out by the Headteacher and Attendance Officer or the Educational Welfare Officer if appropriate

8. Parental requests for Leave of Absence during term-time

Changes to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 came into force in September 2013. These amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Details can be found here:

www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/Regulations-amendments

Our default school policy is that absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Term time is for learning. Children have 175 days off school for holidays and family events. We have a school holiday period approximately every six weeks in the United Kingdom and we expect that families will plan trips and visits in that time. We make our calendar available two years in advance to parents so that they can plan ahead.

At Moss Park Junior School we are aware that occasionally, exceptional circumstances may arise and parents and carers should be aware of the following guidance to Head teachers. Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive.

Key Principles

Any absence, even if it falls into the category of exceptional circumstances as detailed below, will not be authorised if it takes the pupils' attendance down to below 96%. This is the average attendance for primary school pupils in the United Kingdom. Attendance below this is classed as below average and leaves pupils, following further absences or unforeseen illnesses, vulnerable to low attendance that puts them into the category of 'persistent absenteeism' (currently any attendance below 90%).

It is important to note that the Head teacher can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether the absence is authorised at all. The Head teacher's decision is final.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are Rare, Significant, Unavoidable and Short. By Unavoidable, we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

- Absence during term time for a holiday is not considered an exceptional circumstance.
- Absence for a bereavement of a close family member (excluding a parent) is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave. Where extended leave is unauthorised but goes ahead, a fine will be applied.
- Absence for important, recognised religious observances can be taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time – usually no more than 2 days, not extended leave.
- Absence to visit family members are also not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours. Children may need time to visit a seriously ill relative, but if this takes a pupils' attendance down to below 96%, this will not be authorised.
- If a child is absent from school for 10 days without school's permission, the Local Authority will be notified, as per the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance from the Department for Education
- If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence.
- A pupils' attendance record over the four years at Moss Park Junior School will be taken into account when making decisions.
- The needs of families of Service personnel should be taken into account when returning from long, operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled school holiday time.
- Families may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis.
- Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities.
- Occasionally, there are differing holiday dates between schools in the same area. This will be taken into account when considering requests for a leave of absence.

Applying for a leave of absence

Parents should read the school's policy before making the request for a leave of absence so that they may make a considered view on whether the absence is likely to be accepted or denied. Should they feel their requests meets the criteria of 'exceptional circumstances' then further evidence may be requested. Parents

and carers must use the school's leave of application form, which is available from the Office or to download on the school website.

The evidence parents and carers will need to provide depends entirely on what type of leave form school they are applying for, for example:

- Flight tickets to confirm the length of stay
- Proof of an exceptional event taking place
- An official letter from an employer stating that you have been allocated a holiday and that this date is non-negotiable
- Proof of service for military personnel

If you are unable to provide the evidence requested then the leave of absence will not be granted

Where parents take a leave of absence without the Head teacher's authorisation, a fine will be applied by **Trafford Council**. Presently this is £60 per parent, per child. A fine will also be applied if a child does not return from an authorised absence on the agreed date.

Should the absence extend beyond 4 weeks, the child's name will be taken off the school's roll and parents will have to go through Trafford Admissions if they want a place for their child in our school. Parents should be aware that a place may not be available.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Headteacher	Analyse attendance data provided by the Office Manager on a monthly basis Consider requests for authorised absence Authorise absence after it occurs when a satisfactory explanation is accepted. To make decisions as to whether or not a child should be sent home through ill health Contact parents at the earliest risk of a problem to seek a positive outcome in addressing any attendance issues. Conduct Home visits if the absence remains unexplained. Consider the use of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or lateness. Complete witness statements on pupil absence for court use Prepare reports on whole school Attendance for the Governing Body on a termly basis
School Business Manager and Office Staff	Daily checks on class register where a child is recorded as absent Make calls to parents when first day of absence contact has not been made by parents. Accurately record attendance data daily using agreed codes. Record late arrival, time and reason Ensure reasons for absences are accurately recorded and specific details of illness are given Prepare letters to inform parents when a child's attendance is giving cause for concern and is thus being monitored. Collect absence notes and record reasons for absence. Compile and update standard letters re: % attendance, notification of reasons for absence and lateness and send to parents when necessary

Class teachers	Provide a calm warm and welcoming start to each child's day to ensure all children are prepared for the day Registration of pupils at the start of morning and afternoon sessions by 9.00 am and within the first 5 minutes of the afternoon session Return registers to the designated place immediately after registration by 9.05 am Report percentage attendance at parent consultations; encourage regular punctual attendance; work to secure this.
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	Ensure individual incentive are used to re-engage children.
Parents	<p>Ensure their child attends daily and on time</p> <p>Keep the school fully informed on all matters that might affect attendance and their child in school</p> <p>Telephone school on the first day of any absence to inform school of the reason</p> <p>Work with the school to improve matters if attendance becomes a problem</p> <p>Give serious consideration to whether it is appropriate or necessary to request term time absence</p> <p>Make application for any term time leave of absence prior to proposed dates and in line with the school's attendance policy</p>
Governing Body	<p>It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance.</p> <p>The Governing Body also has the responsibility for agreeing the Attendance policy, and for seeing that it is carried out by all parties</p> <p>The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures remain high.</p> <p>The Attendance policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.</p>

7. Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Head teacher. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. Governors will, therefore, examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they possibly can be. The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Policy to be Reviewed: May 2019 or pending new legislation

Signed: (Headteacher)

Date: 23/6/17

Appendix 1 Moss Park Junior School Leave of Absence form