



Moorlands Primary School

High Expectations, High Achievements, Challenge and Enjoyment for All

Attendance Policy

Name of Policy Writer/Amendments	Date Written/Amended	Next Review Date	Approved by Governors
Becky Freeman	July 2017	July 2018	17/7/17
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Introduction:

We are committed to enabling and encouraging all members of the school to be excellent. For your child to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that he/she attends school regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Pupils and parents understand that attendance at school is vital if they are to make the best progress and we will provide an environment that is welcoming and in which they feel valued and safe.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. We celebrate success; we recognise the importance of attendance through a reward scheme.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent, you must:

- Contact the school office as soon as possible on the first day of absence; by e-mail, phone, letter or you can call into school

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer if attendance continues to cause concern
- Our school understands that poor attendance can be an indicator of concern for pupils with welfare and safeguarding concerns, and thus ensures that information is shared between our attendance officer and DSL. Likewise, this school understands that a parent failing to inform the school that a child has an authorised absence could be a cause for concern and thus, we will follow Kirklees Councils' guidance 'First Day Calling' procedures.

First-Day Calling Procedure

1. Class registers completed and saved.
2. Late children arrive through hall doors and are added to the registers by class teacher as late. Check with class to see if they have arrived.
3. Absence messages checked/attendance emails checked.
4. Phone call to first name on contact list within half an hour of school start time, message left wherever possible asking for response.

5. If no response to first name on contact list within 45 minutes of school start time ring down contact list until reply is received, ensuring where possible that someone from outside of the family home has been contacted.
6. If no reply, send a text and an email to first and second contacts on list.
7. Alert HT/DSL that this child is absent and no contact has been made within an hour of school start time.
8. HT/DSL to risk assess the current level of concern and consider whether circumstances warrant a home visit.
9. Home visit to be made following decision at 9, where possible by attendance officer, school staff or any other agency involved with the child.
10. Contact Police to initiate a "safe and well" check if all other stages have been completed and there is still no contact regarding the absent child. This should be done using the 101 number.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have contact numbers at all times. Parents should help us to help parents and their children by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we do not then something important may be missed.

The Education Social Worker:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Social Work Service provided by the Local Authority. Their Social Worker will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Workers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Education Social Work Service themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

The school day;

Morning	8.55 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. (KS1) 12.15pm (KS2)
Afternoon	1.00 p.m. to 3.20 p.m. (KS1) 1.15pm to 3.25pm (KS2)

Pupils are welcomed into school from 8.45am and there are morning tasks for them to complete. The teaching day starts at 8.55am and we expect pupils to be in class and on task at this time. The registers are marked at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

Lateness:

Registration is a key part of the school day and pupils are expected to arrive punctually. The sessions begin at 8.55 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. /1.15pm Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

Pupils are welcomed into school from 8.45am. The teaching day starts at 8.55am and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

In the morning, the pupil entrances are closed at 8.55am. All pupils arriving after this time must enter school through the office entrance. These pupils are recorded in the Late Log together with their time of arrival. All pupils arriving after 9.00am will be marked as late in the register.

At 9.15am, the registers will be closed. If your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher and/or the Education Social Worker to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Absence:

If your child is ill and must stay at home, please inform the school by either telephone or e-mail before 9am. The law requires the school to record any unexplained absences as 'unauthorised absences'.

We would ask that parents/carers make routine medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Please inform the school, by letter/e-mail, in advance, if your child must leave school early or during the school day. Please note that pupils will only be allowed out of school during the day if they are collected from the classroom by a parent or other known adult. Parents must first call at the office to sign their child in/out of school. Whilst any child may be away from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. The school, the parents and the child working together best resolve any problems with regular attendance. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. Parents are to contact Headteacher for support.

If a child has vomited or has had diarrhoea, we ask that they do not return to school until 48 hours after their last bout of illness, which is the guidance given by the NHS.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required, in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school time, religious observance, family bereavement, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Religious observance

3 days are permitted within a 12-month period where a religion other than Christianity is practiced and those days are specifically set by the religious body and the day falls on a usual school day.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absences include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences, which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Persistent minor ailments without the support of a doctor's note
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time.

Term-time absence

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be considered. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. If a penalty notice is levied, payment of £60 per parent per child will be payable. This is increased to £120 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days. The school may directly start legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular attendance at school. If you are found guilty of the offence you may be fined up to £1,000, and you will receive a criminal record. Repeated offences of

leave of absence may result in the matter being directly prosecuted in Kirklees Magistrates' Court. If found guilty, the fine is up to £1,000 and you will receive a criminal record.

Extended absences may have a negative effect on your child's education and progress.

If for whatever reason your child cannot return to school on the stated date, you must inform school by the agreed return date. Finally, you also need to be aware that if your child fails to return to school following 20 days of absence, he/she is at risk of losing their school place.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

Absent pupils

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school.

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

Where a pupil is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register.

Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child

must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the school will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the school will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

Persistent absence (PA)

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect the school will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Where all other avenues of support have failed, legal action may be taken to address poor school attendance. If found guilty, the sentencing is up to £2,500, and/or up to 3 months imprisonment, and/or a community order and you will receive a criminal record.

Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect absence data regarding for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The school will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data to identify patterns and trends.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

The following attendance monitoring procedures are in place:

1. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers and pupils. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
2. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and attendance officer daily.
3. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
4. If a pupil's attendance falls to **97 percent**, the teacher speaks to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls below **90 percent**, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the attendance officer contacts the parents to discuss this.
6. The pupil's attendance is monitored for **two weeks** and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the APSO and set targets for their child.
7. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to **97 percent**.
8. If targets are not met, a **four-week** monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement after an additional **four weeks**, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.

Did you know?

- 90% attendance – 10% absence – is the equivalent of missing half a day per week every week of the year
- Arriving 10 minutes late every day is the equivalent to almost a whole hour of lessons missed each week for your child, which over the year adds up to nearly 2 weeks of learning.

Flowchart for Parents

