



# Moorlands Primary School

*High Expectations, High Achievements, Challenge and Enjoyment for All*

## Attendance Policy

<b>Name of Policy Writer/Amendments</b>	<b>Date Written/Amended</b>	<b>Next Review Date</b>	<b>Approved by Governors</b>
Becky Freeman	July 2017	July 2018	17/7/17
	Amended September 2017		
Becky Freeman	September 2018	September 2020	28 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2018
Becky Freeman	May 2019	September 2021	May 2019
Becky Freeman	September 2021	September 2023	September 2021
Amended	November 22	September 2023	Nov 22
Becky Freeman	September 23	September 25	September 23
Becky Freeman	September 24- amended	September 26	Sept 24

## **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. The Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer can make unannounced visits if we have concerns for a child's or family's welfare.
- 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 9.45am, 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.

### **Attendance Officer**

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 attendance officer. The attendance officer 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 office 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.

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.

### **Consequences of unauthorised leave**

A national Framework for penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, has been introduced, following changes to the law that came into effect from 19th August 2024.

What are these changes?

1. There will be a new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered.
2. The new rules mean you will no longer be able to take your child out of school for one week’s holiday without a penalty notice being issued.
3. There will be an increase in the penalty fine from £60 to £80 if paid in 21 days. If the fine is not paid by the first 21 days, it will rise to £160 if paid within 28 days of being issued.
4. If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
5. If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them.

# ATTENDANCE

## WHAT THE NEW RULES MEAN FOR ME

**1** I'm a single parent of one child and we want to go on holiday for a week.

Your holiday will not be authorised and you must talk to the school before you book anything. Because your child will miss 5 school days you will be given a penalty notice fine. The fine is £160 but if you pay it in 21 days it will be reduced to £80.

**£160**



**2** FOR EVERY CHILD A PENALTY IS GIVEN.



+ £160 + £160 + £160 + £160  
**4 children & 1 parent = £640**  
 Reduced to £320 if paid in 21 days

**IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE**

**10 IN 10**

**5**

If your child is absent for 10 or more sessions in 10 weeks and their absences are unauthorised.

The authority will consider prosecution.

**1** Day = **2** Sessions

**3** FOR A FAMILY OF TWO PARENTS



+ £160 + £160 + £160 + £160

**4 children & 2 parents = £1280**  
 Reduced to £640 if paid in 21 days

If in any period of not more than 3 years, your child has a 2nd and 3rd leave of absence or pattern of irregular attendance...

**4**

<p><b>2ND TIME</b></p> <p>2 parents and 1 child = £320                  2 children = 640                  3 children = 960                  4 children = 1280</p> <p>No discount for early payment</p>		<p><b>3RD TIME</b></p> <p>A penalty notice fine will not be given. Instead, your case will be taken to court. A magistrate can fine each parent £2500 for each child</p> <p><b>1 parent &amp; 4 children = £10,000</b>  <b>2 parents &amp; 4 children = £20,000</b></p>
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### Special occasions

A request for a child to attend a special occasion during school time, e.g. family wedding must be made in advance and the Headteacher will make the decision as whether to authorise the absence. Parents will be notified of the Headteacher's decision.

### Bereavement

The school is sensitive to family requests for a child's attendance at funerals or associated events. The Headteacher will offer the family advice over absence in this instance.

## Days of Religious Observance

Religious observance held by a religious body will be granted as an authorised absence. Only one day for each observation will be granted with up to 3 days per academic year being authorised. The Headteacher should be consulted in advance of the event.

## Holidays in Term Time:

The statutory guidance realised in 2024 that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Under the regulations, it is for the Headteacher to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. The guidance can be found on this link. [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

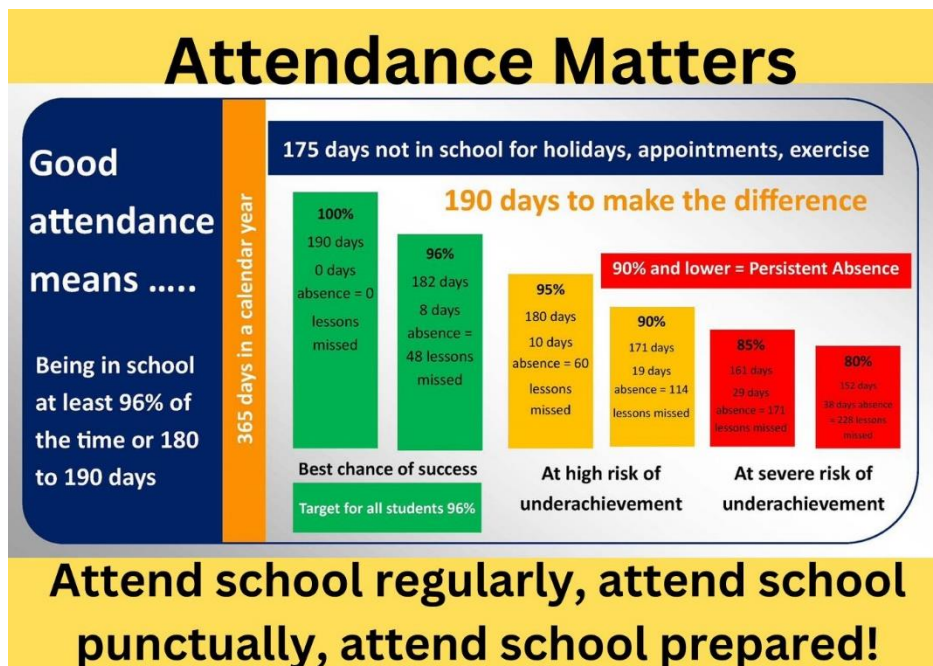
## Exceptional Circumstances

In deciding, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Parents/carers may not authorise their child's absence as only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parent/carer. Moorlands Primary School uses absence coding in line with the Local Authority (LA) guidance. Should parents/carers fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised.

## Did you know?



## Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects

and we need the fullest support and co-operation from parents to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly.

### **School Responsibilities:**

The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress. Registers will be taken twice daily at the start of each morning and afternoon session and will be kept open for a maximum of 30 minutes (in accordance with DfE guidelines). Any child arriving after the register has been called will be recorded as late for that session. If a child arrives after the register has closed but their parent/carer provides them with a note detailing a reason acceptable to the school, they are marked as authorised absence for that session. If they are late and fail to provide an acceptable reason, they will be marked as unauthorised absence for the whole of that session.

Teachers will complete registers in accordance with the guidance they have been given. The registers will be inspected periodically to ensure that they are being satisfactorily maintained and to ensure that any potential attendance difficulties are identified at an early stage.

Should a class teacher have concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality the Headteacher will be informed. The Headteacher will be alerted if any child's attendance falls below the school average, currently 95.8%.

If a child is absent the class teacher will enter N in the register, leaving the office staff to select the correct code for that absence. The school will aim to contact by telephone, any parent who has failed to inform the school of the reason for an absence (first day calling - the primary aim being to check on the safety of the child). This phone call should be done, wherever possible, between 9.30am and 10am.

All absence notes from parents/carers should be dated and initialled by the class teacher and sent to the school office to be held on individual children's files. Only notes concerning absences about which there are concerns/queries should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher (who may then choose to speak to the parents/carers concerned).

Where children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over 5 days, the school will, if requested, send material home so that they can keep up with schoolwork. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period or be a repetitive absence (such as necessary stays in hospital), the school will make arrangements for the child to be given tuition outside of school.

The Headteacher will regularly review attendance data with the attendance officer.

This attendance policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if needed.