



# 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 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.

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**

All potential consequences resulting from unauthorised leave must be clearly communicated and explained to parents. Parents must be made aware of:

- The possibility of a penalty notice being issued (to each parent for each child);
- The possibility of losing the school place, and the likelihood of being re-admitted to the school;
- The possibility of prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for repeat offences of unauthorised leave of absence.
- The possibility of a fine of up to £1,000 and a criminal record for non-payment of a penalty notice should the case go to court.
- unauthorised absences of 20 days may result in a child being removed from roll.

## **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 to 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**

Up to three days, attendance, per academic year, at a religious observance held by a religious body will be granted as an authorised absence. The Headteacher should be consulted in advance of the event.

## **Holidays in Term Time:**

The amendments made in 2013 to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make it clear 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. Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days (Please refer to the Kirklees Penalty Notice document on the school website).

## **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?**

- 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.

## **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% 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.