

The Manor CE Primary School



Attendance Policy

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Signed Chair of Governors	C Aris
Signed Head Teacher	A Flanagan

The Manor CE Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Every lesson counts: Missing school = Missing out.

Rationale

- Regular attendance and punctuality are important if children are to take part fully in the life of the school and to take advantage of the learning opportunities offered by the school.
- We recognise that attending school regularly and punctually is vital to the educational process and encourages a good pattern of work.

Purposes

- To encourage good attendance and discourage lateness.
- To monitor patterns of absence and take actions to seek improvement if appropriate.
- To identify unauthorised absence and take appropriate action.
- To differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence

Success criteria

- A low level of unauthorised absence is maintained and will be below LA average.
- All registers are filled in correctly and promptly, with the correct coding.
- All staff, administration and teaching, are knowledgeable and trained to register absence.
- Parents/carers are made aware of their responsibilities for attendance and punctuality and are involved in the discussion when the attendance and punctuality cause concern.
- All staff recognise it is a collective responsibility to ensure good attendance.

Guidelines

- We accept our role in partnership with parents/carers.
- Parents/carers have the responsibility to ensure regular attendance and punctual arrival in the morning and collection at the end of the school day.

Our responsibility is to support attendance and examine problems that may lead to non-attendance. To do this we keep a register of attendance at the start of every morning and afternoon session. These registers are legal documents and must be kept for three years after the date on which they were last used. Care must be taken to record information accurately.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Headteacher

- a) The Headteacher must ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements e.g., the maintenance of registers and the submission of all data
- b) The Headteacher will make sure that effective monitoring, support and intervention is in place for children whose attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern.
- c) It is only the Headteacher of the school that can authorise absences and requests for any absence in exceptional circumstances where children have a history of very good attendance.

We actively promote good attendance by:.

- A clear internal tracking system, managed effectively by the school's Family Link Worker and the school's Education Welfare Officer.

- A rigorous, but supportive checking system, which allows the Family Link Worker to immediately address potential future attendance issues.
- Good communication systems.

Governors

The role of the Governors is to set aspirational, but achievable targets for attendance. The Governing body is committed to their responsibility for monitoring and supporting the school in reaching its targets for attendance rates.

Parents and carers

Under the 1996 Education Act, it is the law that parents or carers must ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and punctually. Unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents or carers may be reported to the Local Authority if their child(ren)'s absence from school is a significant cause for concern.

With regard to this, parents and carers must follow the school procedures for reporting any absence:

- If a child is unwell, a telephone message should be left on 01454 866555 before 9:00 a.m. on the first and each day of absence stating the reason the child cannot attend school.
- Authorised absence would normally be for cases such as sickness, unavoidable medical/dental appointments and days off for religious observance or exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement.
- If a parent or carer has failed to notify the school office of the absence through either a telephone call or note, they will receive a letter for clarification or it will become **unauthorised**.
- Absence which remains **unauthorised** will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer who will then engage with the family.
- Parents and carers should make all medical appointments outside of school hours whenever possible. Notification of absence for unavoidable medical appointments must be made in advance of the appointment by telephoning the school on 01454 866555.
- Parents or carers must provide proof, such as an appointment card, when absences require further justification.
- Parents or carers should be aware that a letter or phone call does not in itself authorise the absence. Only the Headteacher's acceptance of the explanation will authorise the absence.
- Parents or carers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that their child arrives punctually to school every day. If punctuality problems are of a persistent nature, parents or carers are encouraged to work in partnership with the school to improve the situation.
- Authorisation **will not** be given for absence from school due to **head lice/treatment, shopping trips, birthdays, going to the airport, visiting relatives, buying shoes, going for a haircut, parent or siblings illness.**

Children

- Children should attend school every day unless prevented from doing so due to circumstances which the school would normally authorise.
- Children must arrive at school punctually by 8:50 a.m. This is the latest time we would expect a child to arrive for registration.

Staff

- Every half day of absence has to be classified by the school (not the parent or carer) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why a cause for absence is always required.
- All teaching staff must take the electronic register at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

- Authorisation of absence can only be made at the Headteacher's discretion and with the support of the Governing Body (see Staff Absence Guidelines) who will code each absence in line with the DfE absence codes. Authorised absence would normally be for cases such as sickness, unavoidable medical/dental appointments and days off for religious observance or exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement.
- Authorisation **will not** be given for absence from school due to **head lice/treatment, shopping trips, birthdays, going to the airport, holiday, visiting relatives, buying shoes, going for a haircut, parent or siblings illness.**

Beginning and end of school day

The school accepts responsibility for the supervision of pupils on its premises from 8.40am, the school gates are unlocked at 8.40. Parents are responsible for their child until 8.40 am, unless attending Breakfast Club. The gates will be closed and locked at 08.50.

If your child arrives at school after 8.55 they will be marked as **LATE**. If they arrive after 9.00 the registers will be closed and they will be marked as UNAUTHORSED.

More than 10 unauthorised sessions within a 7 week period will result in the school requesting a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority. **A warning letter will be issued to all parents after four unauthorised absences have been recorded.**

Parents will be able to enter the school playground from 3.10pm when the school gates will be unlocked and pupils are dismissed at 3.15pm in KS1 and 3.20pm in KS2. If pupils are taking part in after-school activities, written information will indicate when supervision of pupils will end.

Requests for absence during Term Time

The Department of Education's guidance encourages the school to take a much firmer stance on absence authorised in term times. Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays and the expectation should be that any absence request for holiday will be unauthorised.

Circumstances that **would not** meet the criteria include:

Relatives coming to visit;

Cheaper holidays in England and abroad;

Family day trips;

Visiting family who have different half terms or holiday;

Grandparents have booked a holiday and parents were not aware of the dates;

Re-occurring car/traffic problems;

Parents are ill and therefore unable to get children to school.

Advance dates of school terms are always published on the South Gloucestershire website. However, the school will also advise of additional training days once they have been agreed. It is important that parents and carers only book holidays during the stated holiday periods.

Procedures for responding to absence and unauthorised absence

- We operate an everyday call system and if a reason for absence has not been communicated to the school office by 9:30 a.m. a call or text to the parent or carer will be made. Every day calling is an effective measure that helps ensure children are safe.
- If a child is absent from school for more than 3 consecutive days (without any explanation being given) a member of the senior leadership team may contact the Local Authority in order to access support services to locate the child.
- If a child's attendance falls below 95% the school's Family Link Worker will contact the parent to discuss any support we can provide to enable attendance to improve.
- Attendance is tracked by the school's Family Link Worker and EWO and regular discussion takes place (7 weekly) to agree follow up actions.

- If the tracking system identifies continuous low absence, an emerging pattern of broken weeks or regular lateness, an awareness letter will be sent to inform parents of the impact of absence.
 - An awareness letter 1 is sent to parents if attendance continues to be a concern.
 - The involvement of the Local Authority (see below for more detail).
- (see appendix 1 and 2 for awareness letters)

Procedures, strategies and sanctions for responding to unsatisfactory attendance and persistent lateness

- The Governors and Headteacher oversee the school's attendance policy and are, therefore, responsible for the management of attendance, absence and punctuality across the school. High levels of attendance will be encouraged through a range of approaches and joint working:
- Attendance data for each child is reviewed by the attendance team every term which highlights those children with unauthorised absence, unsatisfactory levels of attendance, concerning patterns of absence or lateness and high levels of authorised absence from school
- Prompt investigation into issues where a child is experiencing attendance difficulties will be undertaken by the attendance team.
- All teaching and non-teaching staff will regularly use attendance data to help inform meetings with children e.g. mentoring meetings, progress review meetings and pastoral intervention. The links between attainment and attendance will be explicitly made at every opportunity
- Close monitoring of children with attendance below 96%, emerging pattern of broken weeks, persistent lateness and those from vulnerable groups such as, looked after children, SEN, ethnic minority children and children entitled to free school meals
- Effective use of attendance data to inform early intervention programmes or action plans for children who are experiencing emotional or social issues which affect their school attendance.
- Partnership work with a range of external agencies such as, the FYPS worker, School Nurse or Social Services Department to support children and families where wider issues affect school attendance
- Frequent absence due to illness will be closely monitored and parents may be required to attend a medical action plan meeting to discuss a child's health and welfare.
- Parents are expected to have a high regard for critical times such as transitions into school, within school (moves into new year groups) and exam periods, as stated in the school's Home School agreement.

(see appendix 3 for flow chart)

School attendance meetings

For children whose attendance and lateness consistently falls below 96%, parents or carers and children will be invited to attend a school attendance meeting with the school's Family Link worker (Mrs Teresa Mann). This may require follow up meetings with the Headteacher and, if appropriate, the Education Welfare Officer. These meetings provide a useful opportunity to review the reasons for absence and lateness and agree actions that will support the children in making the necessary improvements. These plans set specific targets for attendance and may include the school requesting evidence in support of a child's high level of absence, such as, copies of prescriptions, appointment cards as well as parents or carers providing written permission for the school to contact professionals in the Health service by signing a medical consent form. The school may decide to not authorise any absences unless proof of illness or medical consent is provided. A referral to the school's Education Welfare Officer may be made at this stage.

School attendance panels

We always encourage parents or carers to work in partnership with the school at all times and are focussed on finding a solution to low attendance problems. For any child whose attendance continues to be a concern i.e. unauthorised absence below 95% with no good reason, a meeting will be held in school. This is a more formal meeting which sets out the parent's or carer's responsibilities in ensuring regular attendance to avoid the possibility of legal action. School attendance panels are the first stage of non-attendance legal process. If a child is experiencing problems attending, it is much better for the school to know straightaway so that we can offer our support to you and them.

The Local Authority also work in partnership with parents and when necessary do have the power to issue:

- Penalty notices
- Prosecute parents or carers in the Magistrate court for failure to ensure their child's regular attendance at school
- Education Supervision Order on the child.

Penalty notices

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations came into force on 27th February 2004.

Section 23 (1) of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LEA Officers, Headteachers and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. (Section 444 of the education Act 1996)

A penalty notice of £60 per parent per child if not paid within 21 days may be issued by the Local Authority if **unauthorised absences exceed 10 sessions (5 days) in a 70 session (35 day) period**.. Rising to £120 per parent per child if not paid within 28 days.

The following circumstances may result in a parent/carer being issued with a penalty notice:-

- General non-attendance of more than 10 unauthorised absence sessions (session is half day) within a 6 week period
- Holiday during term time that exceeds 10 unauthorised sessions
- Truancy
- Persistent late arrival at school after 9.25 will result in unauthorised coding

In each case a written warning of a Penalty Notice will be sent.

Conclusion

We believe that excellent attendance and punctuality has a positive impact on educational progress and that this policy and the 'attending school' leaflet will help parent/carers support our attempts to provide the best possible education for the children.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is a working policy and will be subject to regular review in practice. The school will periodically review the process to ensure that it continues to work effectively.