



The Mill Primary Academy
Attendance and Punctuality Policy



ATTENDANCE POLICY



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This policy was adopted: September 2019

The policy will be reviewed: September 2020



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Introduction

We take attendance and punctuality very seriously at The Mill because of the clear links between good attendance and high achievement. Attendance of 96 - 100% is the target all our children should aim for. Anything below this equates to an unacceptable amount of time being taken off school and will, without doubt, have an impact on children's learning and progress.

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school'.

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2013

At The Mill, we are continuously working towards meeting this target for attendance.

Our Aims

- To ensure that all pupils and Parents/Carers are aware of the importance of good attendance.
- To implement effective strategies in improving attendance in school.
- To minimise negative impact of non-attendance on teaching and learning.
- To minimise absence levels.
- To minimise unauthorised absence.

The Legal Framework:

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register
- The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance.

Class Registers

Class registers are recorded using SIMS. The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session. Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times (see below).

Morning Register

Class registers remain open until 08.55. At that point the teacher may submit their final register and close down SIMS. The teacher may submit the register as many times as they wish before 08.55 (e.g. if a mistake has been made or a child has arrived slightly late) but at 08.55 the register must be correct and submitted.



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From 8.55am the school playground gates are closed. Office staff are based in the main office reception to meet children arriving late. This is to ensure that no children are missed on the register due to arriving in school late.

Afternoon Register

Registers must be submitted by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence – registers will be submitted by 1:00pm (Reception and KS1) and 1:15pm (KS2).

Roles and Responsibilities

Head Teacher:

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with the TKAT Crawley Primary Attendance Strategy and Procedure.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices in line with West Sussex Local Authority policies and procedures.

Attendance Officer

- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquiries.
- To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the Headteacher and Education Welfare Officer to monitor the systems and structures ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Work with the teachers to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy as required.

Teachers

- To submit registers on time in line with school policy.
- To speak to parents on parent's evening and other occasions where absenteeism is affecting their child's learning.

Parents:

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school by 8.30am and leave a message on the school absence line. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If a child continues to be ill, the school will contact parents straight away to collect them. If pupils' have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment parents should let the school know and provide appropriate documentation to cover this absence. However, appointments out of school hours should be sought wherever possible. Pupils' should be brought back to school after appointments. The school does provide a Breakfast Club subject to availability that can support parents in ensuring that their child is in school each and every day. Each day parents:



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- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day. As well as being at school every day it is vital that children are at school on time.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Arrange medical and dental appointments outside of the school day where possible.
- Telephone to inform the school on the first day of absence for their child and any subsequent days.
- Provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded next to the child's name on SIMs.
- Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school.
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- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

Attendance Officer:

Daily

- To maintain clear communication with the Senior Management Team (SMT) regarding attendance and punctuality.
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To record reasons for absence and code accordingly. Children who have arrived late must be marked 'L' (late) or 'U' (30 minutes or more late) in the registers. Classroom checks are then carried out for all pupils marked as absent in each class register. The Attendance Officer will then commence first day absence calls.
- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received.
- To promptly inform the SMT if there are any concerns relating to attendance/ punctuality
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy
- Inform parents of school procedures when they have failed to inform the school
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils
- If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made. The Attendance Officer follows this system:
 - Phone parents' contact number(s).
 - Follows this up with a text on the first morning of absence if no response.
 - Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carer and update the school system accordingly.
 - Parents of persistent absentees will be spoken to either face to face or by telephone when the child returns, if contact has not been successful when the child has been absent. This will be done by the Attendance Officer, member of the SMT or in more persistent cases the Education Welfare Officer.
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Weekly

- To monitor weekly attendance data for all year groups.
- To send out weekly letters to parents in the case of absences where no reason has been given.
- To meet with SMT to discuss the attendance data and pupils whose attendance/ punctuality is proving a concern.
- To contact parents of pupils whose attendance is below 96% and has not improved that week.
- To contact any other parents as agreed in weekly meeting with SMT.
- To produce a weekly report for the TAC meeting on Monday mornings and attend the meeting to discuss previous week.
- To liaise with outside agencies and work with the EWO as required following the TAC meeting.
- To report to the Local Authority as requested, in line with TKAT policies.
- 'Attendance Letters are sent to all parents of pupils falling below 96%.

Termly

- To send out termly Red Amber Green (RAG) warning letters to communicate with parents about attendance and punctuality. This will be during a parents evening if in the correct term.
- To produce termly/yearly data alongside Senior Management Team to analyse.
- Identify pupils with attendance at or below 96%.
- More than 1 period of absence – check for any medical reasons or other extenuating factors.
- Identify intervention required for pupils with irregular attendance falling below 96%
- review attendance profile:

Multi Agency Meetings

During weekly Team Around Child (TAC) meetings, the Head, Deputy Head, Attendance Officer and SENDCo monitor individuals, classes, year groups, SEND and Disadvantaged pupils. Patterns and trends in absence/ punctuality are identified including persistent absence. Each case is considered individually and next steps identified. The attendance team will then liaise together and with parents following this.



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Celebrating Attendance

At the Mill we value the efforts that parents and children put into attending school regularly and we celebrate these in a variety of ways.

Weekly Celebration Assemblies

Celebration Assemblies are held every week on Friday Morning. The class with the highest attendance receives the Attendance Cup.

Attendance Certificate

Throughout the year, children with 98%+ attendance receive an attendance certificate to take home and keep. Children with 100% attendance over the whole academic year are rewarded with an opportunity to win a Bicycle at the end of each academic year.

Attendance Letters

Throughout the school year, you will receive attendance update letters for your child. You will be notified if your child is at risk of falling below the expected attendance.

Term Time Holidays

We know that term time holidays are cheaper than holidays taken out of school term time, however prolonged absences are detrimental to the progress that can be made by your children. It is estimated that for every day taken off school, it takes at least a further two days to catch up. Therefore a two week family holiday during term time could potentially take the entire remainder of the half term for children to catch up to where they were before their holiday. This would equate to no progress over a half term due to a holiday.

It is school policy to register any applications for term time holiday as unauthorised, except in exceptional circumstances. This is a governmental directive to all schools and academies.



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Absence from school

On a child's first day of absence, it is the parents'/carers' responsibility to notify the school office by leaving a message on the school's answerphone or by speaking to the office staff directly by 8.30am. A 'first day' telephone call or text message is used by the school office to alert parents if no reason has been given to explain a child's absence.

If a parent/carer fails to respond to contact from the school regarding a reason for absence, the school will then telephone all contacts held on record requesting urgent contact as to the whereabouts of the child. In instances where no contact is received, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed and a decision taken as to whether a home visit will be carried out by a member of staff or Education Welfare Officer.

Absences will be investigated by the school and when a child's attendance falls below 96%, parents/carers will receive a first letter expressing concern. Parents/carers may be invited into the school for a meeting with the school and the Education Welfare Officer. In cases where parents/carers fail to attend this meeting, a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Officer. All absences are recorded on a child's end of year report.

Leave of absence

Any absences taken directly before or after a school holiday/half term will be automatically recorded as Unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided to the school.

Penalty Notices

The Penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice (assumed as 2 working days following the Notice being sent by first class mail), or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the Notice applies. The prosecution relates to irregular school attendance under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Where a prosecution is an appropriate course of action a Caution may be offered by the Local Authority as an alternative method of disposal.

Penalty Notices may be issued when:

- There has been an unacceptable level of unauthorised absence from an educational establishment and enforcement is necessary to improve attendance. Unauthorised absence is absence not authorised by the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences. The categories of authorised and unauthorised absence are explained in the Guidance to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and further clarified in "School Attendance. Guidance for maintained schools, Academies and Independent schools and Local Authorities".
- In the case of a unauthorised holiday taken during term time, if;
 - Parents have not sought permission from the Head Teacher before taking their child out of school for a holiday in term time.
 - The Head Teacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway; or



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- A pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation.
- And there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 school week period.
- A pupil is persistently late to school, i.e. arrives after the register has closed;
- Under truancy sweeps carried out under Crime and Disorder Act 1998 powers, a minimum of 5 sessions of unauthorised absence may generate a Penalty Notice, if these unauthorised absences occur in the 10 school weeks (maximum) after the child was stopped on a the truancy sweep; and
- When an excluded child is present in a public place during school hours on a day which is one of the first 5 school days to which the exclusion relates or, where that exclusion is for a fixed period of 5 days or less, any of the days to which the exclusion relates, under the protocol for Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. No more than 2 Penalty Notices, per child, may be issued to the same parent in a twelve-month period. Alternative action may need to be considered if school attendance offences re-occur, in the light of advice from Legal Services. The Penalty Notice is a notice offering a person the opportunity of discharging any liability to conviction for the offence under S.444(1) Education Act 1996 to which the notice relates by payment of a penalty in accordance with the notice.



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A BRIEF GUIDE TO FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

FPN.EWS@westsussex.gov.uk

Pupil Entitlement: Investigation

Advice Line:

03302 228200

Sections 444 Education Act 1996

Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

What is a FPN?

It is a fine given for unauthorised absence from school, rather than the matter being brought before the courts. It is issued per parent, per child. Please note **only** a Head Teacher can authorise absence from school.

Who issues them?

In West Sussex the Local Authority issues them through the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation

When are they used?

When a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a 10 school week period; a school day is two sessions AM and PM.

This includes; any absence marked in the register as unauthorised.

Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken and is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

A holiday in term time which has not been authorised by the Head Teacher. The Government has directed Head Teachers may only grant leave for a holiday in exceptional circumstances.

FPNs can also be used during the first 5 days of exclusion. Parents are made aware of the consequences by letter when a child is excluded from school.

How much is the FPN?

The FPN is issued with an invoice for £120 and 28 days are given for you to settle the Penalty.

If the FPN is paid within the first 21 days the amount payable is reduced to £60.

How do I pay?

The information on how to pay is included on the FPN. Payment cannot be made in part or by instalments.

What happens if I don't pay?

If you don't pay within the 28 days the Authority will consider instigating a prosecution in the Magistrates Court for the offence of poor school attendance. If proven this could result in a fine of up to £1000 per parent per child and/or a parenting order or a community service order and also costs.



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Please note under the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 (Criminal Courts Charge) Regulations 2015 the court will automatically include Costs to the court of a minimum of £150 if you are found guilty of the offence. This is in addition to any other costs requested by the prosecution.

Can I appeal?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a Notice has been issued.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Fixed Penalty Notice?

You cannot be prosecuted for the period of absence identified in the Fixed Penalty Notice. You may subsequently be prosecuted for further periods of unauthorised absence from school. Each case is considered on an individual basis.

**** REMEMBER ****

School staff would much rather work with parents/carers to resolve poor attendance than resort to enforcement actions like Fixed Penalty Notices or Court

Pupil Entitlement: Investigation

Fixed Penalty Notice Team

Pupil Entitlement: Investigation

West Sussex County Council

Centenary House

Worthing

West Sussex

BN13 2QB

Email: FPN.EWS@westsussex.gov.uk



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