



# ATTENDANCE POLICY



## 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.

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.



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.
- 
- 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.

#### **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.



### 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.



The Mill Primary Academy  
Attendance and Punctuality Policy



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
- ☐ 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.

6. 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



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.

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](mailto:FPN.EWS@westsussex.gov.uk)



Headteacher  
Mrs Sophie Gosden  
Executive Head  
Mr Neil Small B.A. (Hons), M.A., PGCE, NPQH



National Support School  
designated by



National College for  
Teaching & Leadership

## Appendix 1 -Arrangements from Sept 2020

The Mill Primary school will be open for all pupils' full-time education from September 2020. Our school reopens to all of our pupils on **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020.**

### Health and safety

We are working hard to ensure that we reduce unnecessary contact between different year groups of pupils, and keep the stringent cleaning and disinfecting processes we already have in place, ensuring that our school is as safe as can be for your child and our staff. To help us reduce the number of people on site at one time, we will have staggered drop-off and collection times. We might need to ask you to use a different gate to the one you usually do. Sorry about this, but we have almost 500 pupils to get safely into the building! Staff will be out and showing you where to go. Please arrive for your exact time slot. The office will remain available by phone and email and pre-arranged appointments only for the time being.

### Front Gate

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will come in through the front gate on Ifield Drive. All staff will be out to greet you and your children and showing you where to go.

Reception and Year 1: drop-off 8.40am, collection 2.50pm.

Year 2: drop-off 8.50am collection at 3.00pm.

*Older siblings come in/go home with the youngest. So, for example if you have a Reception and Year 2 child, bring them both in at the Reception time so you are not waiting around and we will do our best to make sure they are ready to go home at the end of the day!*

### Back Gate

Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 will come in through the back gate off Shipley Road. All staff will be out to greet you and your children and showing you where to go.

Year 5 and Year 6: drop-off 8.40am, collection 2.50pm.

Year 3 and Year 4: drop-off 8.50am, collection 3.00pm.

*As above, if you have siblings, bring them both in/collect at the earlier time, older siblings will be sent to their younger siblings' collection point.*

### Symptoms of Covid19 or positive tests

You must ensure that if anyone in your household has COVID-19 symptoms, your child does NOT attend school, that the person seeks a test and you please report this to us. Any child or staff member who develops symptoms in the school day will be sent home immediately and advised to seek a test, and you will be informed at the time and of the outcome of any test. If anyone in your household, or your child, *tests positive* for COVID-19 you MUST inform us and follow the Test and Trace guidance. Anyone in the same Year group bubble as a person that tested positive for COVID-19, as well as their household members, will also be asked

Headteacher

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to self-isolate for 14 days. More information can be found on *the Gov.uk website in Education and childcare during coronavirus*.

### **Getting to and from school and public transport and Face Masks**

The government has advised walking or cycling to school wherever possible, to reduce the use of public transport. Face coverings are now used if using public transport to get to school. For Key Stage 2 pupils using public transport, reusable face coverings need to be removed and stored in a named plastic bag in their school bag. For Key Stage 1 children, parents and carers take the masks home after dropping your child at school, bringing it back for pick-up. (We feel that Key Stage 2 pupils (Years 3 - 6) are less likely to lose their masks, so are able to keep them in their school bag, but this is more challenging for little ones, and we do not want masks getting mixed up or lost.) After removing masks, hands need to be washed/sanitised - which will happen as soon as children come into class.

### **Attendance**

During lockdown, the government relaxed the rules on attendance. However, the usual rules on attendance will apply again now. The government guidance says: *'Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school.*

*School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term.* The expectation at The Mill is that all pupils return from 7<sup>th</sup> September and attend school daily. See *appendix 2 Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year.* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>

### **Supervision and handwashing**

We will help all pupils to follow strict behaviour rules relating to physical contact with other pupils, and keeping their hands clean. Pupils will wash their hands regularly, under instruction (and supervision for younger ones) by adults.

### **Lunches**

School lunches will be available again, and we will be starting by providing hot meals for Early Years, and Years 1 & 2 only, with packed lunches for other year groups, reviewing this as soon as we can. Lunches and breaks will be staggered, with additional cleaning between seatings and eating. You can provide your child with a lunch bag or box from home as usual, please ensure these are named.

### **Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones can only be brought to school if your child is in Years 3 to 6 and is walking home alone. These will need to be put in a clear, named bag and handed to the teacher on arrival. Please ensure all mobile phones are switched off in school.

### **Breakfast and after-school clubs**

We will not be offering this for the first weeks back, but we will write to all parents asking if you would like to take up places as soon as we can set this up again.

### **Playtimes and lunch play**

To reduce the number of pupils in one place at one time, playtimes, lunchtimes and lunch playtimes will be staggered and pupils will only come into contact with children in their year group 'bubble'.

### **Classroom set-up and equipment**

It will be more important than ever that your child has their own equipment in school, to ensure that what needs to be shared is minimised. We will provide basic equipment in a little personalised pack, so please do not send in any pencil cases from home. Children should bring a named water bottle every day. Classrooms will be set up according to safety guidance and seating arrangements are in line with latest safety guidance. Please do not send any additional equipment or toys in with your children.



### **Uniform**

All pupils will be expected to wear school uniform from Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September. Updated DfE guidance now says that uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal. To minimise the amount of movement and contact with classrooms and year group areas, pupils won't be changing into PE kits, but on the day your child has PE, wearing their trainers is suggested. Please ensure all uniform is named.

### **Anxiety and support**

We want to reassure you that we know your children well, and care for their well-being deeply. We have an experienced staff, trained in mental health and well-being, and we will support pupils as needed. The odd wobble and bit of nervousness is completely normal, and we are well prepared for it. We have set up virtual assemblies and classes will hold discussion times, plus arrange for any pupils who are feeling anxious to have the opportunity to talk to a trained member of staff who will be able to listen and support them. We will also make you aware if we feel your child is struggling.

### **Moving forward and getting back to teaching and learning**

We are adapting our curriculum and timetables to make sure that our pupils catch up and get the learning and knowledge that they need to achieve. We will also be providing additional support for learning through additional teaching time with our own teachers, which I will be able to inform you about in more detail in the coming weeks.



1. Home (<https://www.gov.uk/>)
2. School and college behaviour and attendance (<https://www.gov.uk/topic/schools-colleges-childrens-services/school-behaviour-attendance>)
3. School attendance: guidance for schools (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>)

**Part of**  
**Education and childcare during coronavirus**  
**(<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon/education-and-childcare>)**

1. Department  
for Education (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>)

Guidance

# **Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year**

Updated 1 September 2020

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New for 2020 to 2021 – not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Attendance codes

Examples in which 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' could apply

## Purpose of this document

This document is an addendum to the non-statutory school attendance: guidance for schools (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>). It replaces temporary guidance documents on recording attendance during the outbreak.

For ease of reference, it explains and illustrates changes made to regulations<sup>1</sup> governing school attendance registers in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) from 24 August 2020 for use in the 2020 to 2021 academic year. It should be read in conjunction with the wider guidance document which gives advice on other usual attendance duties and processes that remain in force.

## Attendance expectations

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

## New for 2020 to 2021 – not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

To make sure schools record this accurately and consistently, we have made changes to the regulations<sup>2</sup> governing school attendance registers to add a new category of non-attendance – 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)<sup>3</sup>
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

## Attendance codes

From the beginning of the new academic year, schools should return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak (set out on page 9 of the attendance guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>)), in addition to the new category of 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)':

View stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>) and NHS test and trace (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works#people-who-have-had-close-contact-with-someone-who-has-coronavirus>) guidance.

Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19).

The NHS test and trace (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works#people-who-have-had-close-contact-with-someone-who-has-coronavirus>) guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). In the event of a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious. Code X should be used for these pupils during this period.

## **Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine**

View guidance on how to self-isolate when you travel to the UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk>).

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine<sup>5</sup>. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register.

## **Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only**

View guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons from Covid-19 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>).

Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

If in future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high. Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents will be able to share with the school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from PHE or the DHSC should be recorded as code X.