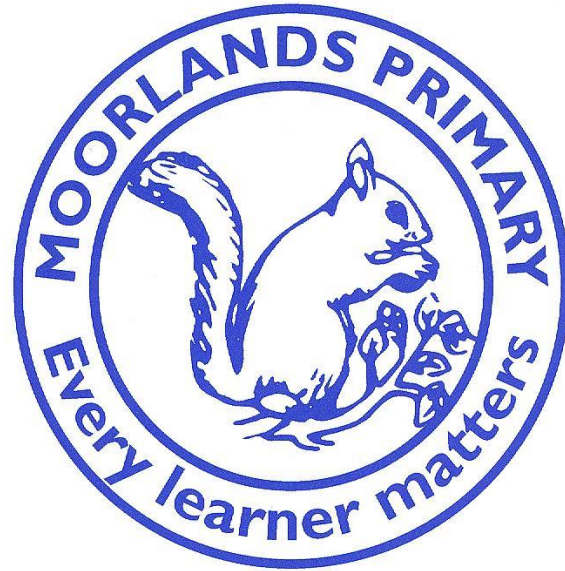


Attendance Policy



This policy must be read in conjunction with the following:

- School Attendance Guidance for Maintained schools (DFE) Nov 2016
- School Attendance Roles and Responsibilities, Guidance for Schools (SCC) Sept 2016
- Children Missing in Education, Guidance for Schools (SCC) Sept 2016
- Code of Conduct for use of Fixed Penalty Notices in cases of Non-Attendance 2017-18
- Elective Home Education Protocol (SCC)

This policy sets out Moorlands Primary School Attendance Policy and procedures.

Signed by Head Teacher _____

Signed by Chair of Governors _____

Review Date _____



Moorlands Primary School

Attendance Policy

“Attendance is everyone’s responsibility.”

“School Attendance Matters- Be in that number”

1. Introduction

- a) It is a legal requirement that children of statutory school age receive an appropriate education “by attendance at school or otherwise” (Education Act 1996). We therefore expect all children on roll to attend school every day, when school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy to do so.
- b) It is the shared responsibility of parents/carers, the school and Local Authority to ensure that high standards of attendance are achieved.
- c) The school has a responsibility to support pupils’ attendance by providing the best possible quality education and providing advice and support to those parents/carers who have difficulty in maintaining a good level of attendance.
- d) All adults have a responsibility to promote positive attitudes in our young children towards school life, including the importance of punctuality and attendance.
- e) We recognise that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. Through our home-school agreement, parents agree to ensuring their child’s the regular and punctual attendance. As part of our annual written reports to parents, the children’s attendance records are shared

The Government expects Schools and Local Authorities to:

- a) Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- b) Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and act early to address patterns of absence.
- c) Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- d) All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

2. Aims and objectives:

- a) For all children to have 97% attendance or above
- b) To ensure that children will have access to a school place, in line with the LA admissions policy.
- c) To clearly articulate the links between regular attendance and achievement.



- d) To challenge poor attendance, encourage improvement and when necessary to take action to enforce attendance.
- e) To liaise with parents/carers in a supportive role where patterns of absence or late arrivals emerge.
- f) To liaise with the Education Welfare Officer and refer cases as appropriate and in line with the school's procedures.

The Attendance Team will be responsible for:

- a) Ensuring that a morning and afternoon register is taken or record the absence of every pupil, every day.
- b) Tracking the levels of authorised or unauthorised absences at the school, across individuals, cohorts and vulnerable groups
- c) Efficiently maintaining the class registers
- d) Monitoring absence patterns and reporting to Head Teacher on at least a monthly basis.
- e) Liaising with the Education Welfare Officer, after tracking attendances/late arrivals on a half termly basis
- f) Complete a half termly EWO audit for those under 90% attendance
- g) Complete a half termly internal audit for those under 97% attendance
- h) Updating and coding of absences on SIMS appropriately
- i) Inform parents /carers of concerns by phone call or letter, including an opportunity for the carer to give reason for absences
- j) Follow up attendance letters by inviting parents / carers into school for meetings to address attendance concerns and offer support
- k) Recording reasons for late arrivals and ensuring parents/carers "sign" in
- l) Completing attendance review and report to share with the Head Teacher and Governing Body

The Parents / Carers will be responsible for:

- a) Ensuring that their child arrives at school by 8.55am
- b) Explaining to the office reasons for late arrival. After 8.55am children will be given a late mark.
- c) Reporting to the school when their child is sick by telephoning or sending in a written note. Failure to do so will result in an "unauthorised" absence.
- d) Where possible, arrange medical appointments outside of the school day.
- e) Provide evidence where an unavoidable medical appointment is made during the school day.



- f) Liaising with the school staff, if there is a genuine problem in maintaining regular and punctual attendance.

The *Head Teacher* will be responsible for:

- a) Liaising regularly with the Attendance Team
- b) Communicating with and supporting those carers who encounter difficulty in ensuring their child's regular attendance or punctuality.
- c) Reminding parents/carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality through newsletters and assemblies.
- d) Authorising the attendance to refer a family to the EWO where there are concerns surrounding attendance
- e) Liaising with EWO as appropriate.
- f) Working with other outside agencies, if necessary.
- g) Updating the governing body on any issues linked to attendance and punctuality on a monthly basis.

3. Procedures:

Admission Register

- The school's admission register SIMs records the personal details of every pupil in the school, including their admission date, unique pupil number and any relevant information regarding previous schools attended.
- Moorlands Primary School adheres to the admissions procedures as identified by the Southampton City Council admissions team and the DFE School Attendance Guidance (November 2016) This includes procedures for Children at Risk of Missing Education and those leaving Moorlands to attend another school.
- The school seeks to correctly code all absences, according to the reasons provided or advice of the attendance team, head teacher or EWO.

Elective Home Education

- Moorlands adheres to the admissions procedures as identified by the Southampton City Council Admissions team and the DFE School Attendance Guidance (November 2016)
- Parents must state in writing that they are choosing to electively home educate.
- We do not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of addressing poor attendance.



Late arrivals to school

- We have a duty to keep registers open for 'a reasonable length of time'
- Arrivals between 8.55 and 9.05am will be coded as 'L' for late, with the number of minutes late recorded
- Arrivals after 9.05am are recorded as 'U' after the close of the register. This code is unauthorised and will affect overall attendance.
- The School Attendance Team will endeavour to support and work with families where arriving to school on time is of particular difficulty

Notifying of illness

- Parents / carers must notify the school office by 9am in case of absence.
- Parents / carers are required to update the school each day a child is ill.
- On occasion, medical evidence may be requested by the School Attendance Team. This is usually where a child has repeated or extended absence due to illness. This may constitute a doctor's note / stamp, named prescription or medication

Following up unexplained and unexpected absence

- Absences will be authorised where the school has either given approval in advance for being absent or has accepted an explanation for reasons for absence.
- Some absences will be unauthorised, even if a reason is given, under advice from the School Attendance Team or EWO. For example on the grounds of repeated illness, with no medical evidence given or persistent absence with no acceptable explanation given.
- Where no reason for absence has been provided, a member of the Attendance Team will follow up with a phone call home. If there is no reason provided after this, it may be followed up with a letter home or invitation into school to discuss the reasons for the absence.

Leave of absence on grounds of 'Exceptional Circumstances'

- Head teachers cannot grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- Exceptional circumstances being defined as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period



- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Southampton City Council's Legal department.
- Each case will be considered on a case by case basis.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- While we appreciate that holidays are generally less expensive during term time but this does not count as exceptional circumstances. Leave of absence which is taken for the following reason will not be authorised:
 - × Availability of cheaper holidays
 - × Availability of desired accommodation
 - × Poor weather experienced in school holidays
 - × Overlap with beginning or end of term
 - × Booked the wrong dates by mistake
 - × Booked by another family member
 - × Attending a wedding that is not immediate family
 - × Family birthdays

Medical appointments during school hours

- Where possible, parents and carers are asked to make appointments outside of the school day. (eg doctor / dentist)
- Where this is not possible, parents and carers are asked to show a copy of an appointment letter with the office in order that it can be coded as an authorised absence. (eg hospital)

4. Monitoring and Rewarding attendance

- a) An Attendance Audit is carried out on a half termly basis with the school's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) for all pupils who attendance is below 90%
- b) An internal Attendance Audit is carried out on a half termly basis for all pupils who attendance is below 97%, the whole school target
- c) The School Attendance Team scrutinises the data for all children, including vulnerable groups, cohorts as well as for specific codes
- d) Children with improved attendance are rewarded as part of Celebration Collective Worship
- e) Children with 100% attendance are rewarded at the end of the year
- f) There is an attendance strategy reviewed by the Attendance Team on a regular basis, with class teachers and office staff updated of regular absence or persistent lates. The focus of the strategy is to raise the profile of attendance across the school community.

Sources used in the development of this policy:

- School Attendance- Guidance for maintained school, academies, independent schools and local authorities (DFE, November 2016)
- The Education Act 1996

