

# Moorlands Primary School Attendance Policy



Signed by Head Teacher

Signed by Chair of Governors

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# 1. Policy Vision & Ethos

At Moorlands Primary School, our purpose is to unlock every pupil's potential within a safe, inspiring, and inclusive learning environment. We believe excellent school attendance is vital for academic success, social development, and personal well-being.

Improving attendance is **everyone's business**. We adopt a **Support-First Approach** in line with DfE statutory guidance: **Expect, Monitor, Listen and understand, Facilitate support, Formalise support, and Enforce.**

## 2. Expectations & Daily Routines

### Timings & Registration

- **8:40 AM:** Classroom doors open.
- **8:50 AM:** School day officially begins; morning registers taken electronically.
- **9:00 AM:** Morning registers close.

### Lateness & Arrival

- **Arrival between 9:00 AM and 9:30 AM:** Marked as 'Late before registers close' (Code L).
- **Arrival after 9:30 AM:** Marked as 'Late after registers close' (Code U). Code U is an **unauthorised absence** for the morning session and can form part of statutory penalty notice triggers.

### Absence Reporting

Parents must contact the school office before 9:00 AM on **every day** of an unexpected absence:

- **Phone:** 02380 464404 (Leave child's name, class, and specific reason for absence).
- **Arbor App:** Submit absence notification.
- **Email:** [info@moorlandsprimary.net](mailto:info@moorlandsprimary.net)

Generic messages such as "*unwell*" or "*sick*" are insufficient and will result in follow-up calls from the Attendance Team.

### 3. Understanding the Impact: Lost Learning Time

Missing school builds up rapidly. The table below illustrates the impact of absence on learning time across a single primary academic year:

| Attendance % | Days Lost per Year | Equivalent Weeks Missed | Impact on Learning & Key Stage Outcomes                                |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 97%–100%     | 0 – 5.5 Days       | Under 1 Week            | Best chance of securing Expected Standard (EXS) or Greater Depth (GDS) |
| 95%          | 9.5 Days           | 2 Weeks                 | Slight dip; monitored via Tier 1 automated Arbor tracking              |
| 90%          | 19 Days            | 4 Weeks                 | Persistent Absentee (PA). Misses ~100 core Phonics/Maths sessions      |
| 85%          | 28.5 Days          | 6 Weeks                 | Formal SARM meeting & Parenting Contract required                      |
| 80%          | 38 Days            | 7.5 Weeks               | Multi-Agency Early Help & Team Around the Family (TAF) opened          |
| <50%         | 95+ Days           | 19+ Weeks               | Severe Absentee (SA). Critical safeguarding risk; weekly home visits   |

## 4. The Moorlands 6-Tier Escalation & Internal Mitigation Protocol

To deliver swift intervention without overloading staff, Moorlands Primary operates a structured 6-Tier protocol utilizing Arbor automation for Tiers 1-3 to free up our Inclusion Team for aggressive face-to-face casework in Tiers 4-6:

| Tier   | Trigger                          | Action                                                                           |
|--------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tier 1 | Day One Protocol (9:00 AM)       | Automated Arbor SMS/email to caregiver                                           |
| Tier 2 | Informal Support (<92% / 3 days) | FISO Early Help chat; Anchor Adult gate drop                                     |
| Tier 3 | Formal Challenge (<85%)          | SARM meeting & 4-week Parenting Contract                                         |
| Tier 4 | Multi-Agency Support (<80%)      | EHA opened; Team Around the Family (TAF) - EAL translators utilized where needed |
| Tier 5 | Statutory Escalation (<50%)      | Legal bundle to SCC; weekly SLT home visits                                      |
| Tier 6 | Leadership Backstop              | Manual Action Log; LSCP formal dispute challenge                                 |

## **Tier 1: Day One Absence Protocol (Trigger: Unexcused at 9:00 AM)**

- **Who:** Attendance Officer (daily 9:00–10:30 AM window).
- **Action:** Automated Arbor SMS/email sent to primary caregivers asking if support is needed.
- **Internal Mitigation:** If unanswered, a supportive voicemail is left and logged on Arbor. Unexplained absences default to 'N' and convert to 'O' (unauthorised) after 5 days if unverified.

## **Tier 2: Internal Support & Scaffolding (Trigger: Drops below 92% or 3 consecutive days)**

- **Who:** Family & Inclusion Support Officer (FISO - Tuesdays & Fridays) + Class Teacher.
- **Action:** FISO conducts an informal "Early Help" chat to co-produce an internal Attendance Support Plan. An "Anchor Adult" is assigned to meet the child at the gate.
- **Internal Mitigation:** If parents disengage, school-based adaptations continue (e.g., CICO routines, quiet morning spaces). Refusal is logged on CPOMS.

## **Tier 3: Internal Challenge (Trigger: Drops below 85% or Tier 2 fails)**

- **Who:** FISO + SLT Representative.
- **Action:** Formal School Attendance Review Meeting (SARM) held to establish a formal 4-week Parenting Contract. Medical evidence may be required for future illness authorisations.
- **Internal Mitigation:** Contract breaches build the legal evidence bundle for Tier 5. The SENCo adapts the curriculum/environment to maintain achievement expectations.

## **Tier 4: External Agency & Early Help (Trigger: Drops below 80% or Contract breached)**

- **Who:** FISO (Coordinates multi-agency referrals).
- **Action:** Formally opens a multi-agency Early Help Assessment (EHA) and convenes a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting with Southampton EWO, Social Care, or CAMHS. Utilizes EAL translators for home visits and meetings where language is a barrier.
- **Internal Mitigation:** If external agencies reject or delay support, the rejection date is logged on CPOMS. The internal team (FISO, SENCo, Lead DSL) delivers internal food/uniform support and ELSA check-ins.

## **Tier 5: Statutory & Legal Escalation (Trigger: Drops below 50% / Severe Absence)**

- **Who:** Headteacher & Senior Leadership Team.
- **Action:** Full legal bundle submitted to Southampton City Council Attendance Team for Fixed Penalty Notices or Section 444 prosecution.
- **Internal Mitigation:** If the LA rejects the bundle, safeguarding procedures take over. SLT conducts weekly unannounced doorstep welfare visits. If the child is unseen, police/MASH welfare checks are triggered.

## **Tier 6: Complete External Failure & The Leadership Backstop (Trigger: Agencies close case despite critical risk)**

- **Who:** Headteacher & Safeguarding Governor.
- **Action 1 (Audit Trail):** Open the manual **Tier 6 Action Log** to record every rejected referral—serving as an Ofsted protective shield.
- **Action 2 (External Challenge):** Headteacher formally writes to the Southampton Director of Children's Services, invoking the LSCP 'Resolution of Professional Disagreements' policy.
- **Action 3 (Leadership Backstop):** Deploy the school's **Ringfenced Budget Strategy** to fund bespoke internal solutions (e.g., 1:1 SENCo support, modified part-time timetables).

## 5. Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) & Medical Absences

Moorlands Primary follows DfE guidance on mental health and school attendance:

- **High Expectations with Empathetic Support:** Being away from school can heighten anxiety. Attending school is often therapeutic.
- **Medical Evidence Rules:** We do **not** routinely request medical evidence for short-term illness. However, for recurring absences or where attendance drops below 90%, medical evidence (e.g., prescription label, appointment text, GP letter) will be required to authorise illness marks.
- **EBSA Framework:** Children experiencing emotional barriers are supported via **Check-in Check-out (CICO)**, **EBSA Phonics home videos**, **Bucket Therapy**, and **Anchor Adults**.

## 6. Children Missing Education (CME) & 10-Day Unexplained Absence

If a pupil is continuously absent for **10 consecutive school days** without explanation or contact:

1. School completes Days 1–10 safeguarding checklist (calls to emergency contacts, emails, social media/sibling checks, unannounced home visits).
2. If the pupil remains unseen and location unconfirmed by Day 10, the Lead DSL submits a statutory **Child Missing Education (CME) Referral** to Southampton City Council.

## 7. Part-Time Timetables

Part-time timetables are used **only in exceptional circumstances** (e.g., phased reintegration following severe illness/surgery):

- Must be agreed in writing by the Headteacher and parent.
- Time-limited to a maximum of 6 weeks, with 2-weekly review dates.
- **Never** used to manage pupil behaviour.

## 8. Term-Time Leave of Absence & Holidays

Headteachers **cannot** grant leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**:

- **Holidays for leisure/recreation do not qualify** and will be marked as Unauthorised Holiday (Code G).
- Leave requests must be submitted on the Pupil Absence Request Form at least 4 weeks in advance.

## 9. Statutory Legal Interventions & Penalty Notices

Where voluntary support is refused or unauthorised absence occurs (e.g., term-time holidays), Moorlands Primary enforces legal sanctions via Southampton City Council under the 2026 National Framework.

### The National Penalty Notice Trigger

10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period.

| Penalty Notice             | Cost and Consequence                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1st Fine                   | £80 if paid within 21 days; rises to £160 if paid within 28 days. (Per parent, per child)                                   |
| 2nd Fine (Within 3 Yrs)    | Flat rate of £160 within 28 days. (No discounted early payment option)                                                      |
| 3rd Offence (Within 3 Yrs) | Fines no longer permitted. Case escalates directly to Magistrates' Court prosecution under Section 444 (Fines up to £2,500) |

## **Notice to Improve (NTI)**

Before issuing a penalty notice for general unauthorised absence, the school or LA may issue a formal **Notice to Improve**, giving parents a final 3 to 6-week window to engage with support and restore regular attendance.

## **10. Policy Monitoring & Governance**

This policy is reviewed annually by the Headteacher and the Governing Body. Live attendance trends, PA rates, and vulnerable cohort splits are scrutinised weekly at the **Friday Inclusion Triage Panel** and reported termly to Governors.