

Moss Park Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

April 2023

Date Updated	April 2023
Policy Written By	S Nunwick (Headteacher) and Administrative Team
Date Approved by Governors	
Date of Next Review	September 2023 or subject to changes in legislation/DFE guidance
Responsible Committee	Pupil Welfare, Curriculum and Standards
Signed by Chair of Governors	

1. Introduction

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised (permission given by the Headteacher) or unauthorised (permission not given).

2. Aims of the policy

- To ensure that all learners attend school well
- To ensure that all learners are punctual and ready to learn
- To win the support of parents in ensuring that their children attend school well and that they arrive on time
- To keep good records of attendance through the school registers and to take prompt action to follow up absences
- To investigate and act immediately where truancy is suspected or confirmed
- To work effectively with the LA and other agencies to follow up attendance issues promptly and effectively
- To monitor closely pupils with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents and where appropriate other agencies to bring about improvement

3. Definitions

- Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either a period of **authorised** or **unauthorised** leave. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.
- An absence is classified as **authorised** when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- **Unauthorised** absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and/or for which no reason for the period of leave has been given.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. The Headteacher may not, in some circumstances, accept the reason given for the absence and will record it as unauthorised. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.
- Absences that will not be authorised include those that have not been explained within 7 days
- Persistent Absenteeism: this is recorded when a child's attendance falls below 90%
- At Moss Park Primary School, a child is **late** if they enter school when the rest of the school has gone in to start learning

4. Positive measures to encourage good attendance

- Registers will be completed accurately at the start of each day (school begins at 8.45am and the register is taken by 8.55am. Children arriving after 8.55 am are late and will receive a Late Mark in the register)
- Daily monitoring by class teachers and school administration staff to raise concerns where appropriate

- Regular monitoring by Headteacher of attendance and punctuality and texts/letters home following this monitoring
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions and trained staff to administer some medicines in school
- Regular monitoring by Education Welfare Officer of attendance and punctuality
- Involvement of the Educational Welfare Officer if a child's attendance falls below 90%
- Communication with parents and pupils about the educational benefits of good attendance and punctuality
- Certificates for outstanding attendance (Bronze 97%+, Silver 98%+, Gold 99%+, 100%)
- Certificates for significant improvement in a pupil's attendance
- Weekly Class Attendance Champions Trophy
- Each time a class wins the weekly trophy, they will receive a nominal £10 token to go towards a special activity, chosen by them, at the end of the year

5. Punctuality/Lateness

We place a great deal of importance on the need to be punctual and to arrive in school on time. Not only does this make for a good start to the day but also it shows consideration for everyone else in the class and avoids repetition of instructions and teaching. It save pupils from embarrassment of walking into their classroom late when everyone else is working.

We open the gates to the playground, which is then supervised by a teacher or senior leader, at 8.40 am each morning, each day. This allows parents to drop their children off safely before taking younger children round to the Infant School or travelling elsewhere. School starts at 8.45 - pupils immediately enter the school to start their learning activities such as times tables, handwriting practice, response to marking, reading and vocabulary work. The Gate is locked at 8.55 am.

All adults and children who arrive at school after the gate is shut must enter through the main office and sign in on our electronic system. If a child has to sign in via the office because the gates are locked, they are late.

Registers is taken at 8.55 am. The registers are then closed and submitted to the office. Those who have not arrived in time for the close of the register will receive a **formal LATE** mark in the register.

We monitor lateness every day. We send a text to parents when a pupil is late to remind them of our start times. When a pupil has arrived late for the second time in a week, they may need to catch up on the activity missed. This is so they will not be disadvantaged against their peers. This will be completed at the end of the first lesson. This is not a sanction – it is a few minutes of catch-up learning time. Teachers treat pupils who are late sensitively and non-judgmentally as it is rarely their fault that they are late.

If your child arrives after 9.30 am, they will be marked with a 'U' 'late after register closed'. They are marked as being on site but this does not count as a present mark and will show as an **unauthorised absence** and affect their attendance record.

School action – punctuality concerns (short term and long term)

Late Texts go out daily (from the signing in book)
Late Text 2 (meaning twice in one week) goes out and pupils complete work missed at start of break
Late Book is monitored every 4 weeks on a Friday by the Headteacher and Attendance Officer
Letter 1 – initial letter with offer of support and informal meeting and notice of further monitoring.
Letter 2 – no improvement by the next 4 week check, request to attend meeting with Headteacher and notice that your child will be discussed with Trafford Educational Welfare Team at the next visit.
Letter 3 – no improvement in punctuality despite Letter 1 and Letter 2. Pupils will be discussed with the with EWO team with a view to taking further action – this will result in a warning letter, a request to attend a joint meeting or home visit and could result in a fixed penalty fine and court action.

6. Late Collection of pupils

School finishes at 3.25 pm and it is expected that parents will be on the school premises to pick up their child/children on time. Whilst we recognise that there may be one off emergencies, it is not the responsibility of school staff to supervise pupils because parents are late. This interrupts the work of staff and is also upsetting for pupils. Pupils who have not been picked up by 3.35 pm become the responsibility of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team.

In the situation where the parents/carers or authorised person is late in collecting their child/ren and has not notified the school that they will be late, the member of staff is responsible for contacting parents/carers. If they are not available, they will contact the next person authorised to collect the child/ren requesting that they collect the child as soon as possible and so on down the contacts list.

Parents will sign the 'Late Collection' book in the office when collecting their child. If parents are regularly late collecting their child/ren from school, the Headteacher will contact them to discuss the matter further. If there is no improvement, the designated lead for Child Protection will refer the matter to Social Care.

If a pupil attends one of our after school clubs, the same protocols apply. Parents should arrive promptly at the club finishing time and notify the school as soon as possible if they are going to be late. In the event of children being collected late from an after school club on a regular basis then the adult running the club reserves the right to ask that the child not attend in the future. We operate a '3 strikes' policy and a pupil who is collected late will not be able to attend after the 3rd late pick up.

7. Medical Appointments

Medical appointments go on the register as half a day's **authorised** absence. Parents should let us know in advance of medical appointments. Pupils should come into school before attending morning appointments and always return to school directly after an appointment, even if this for part of the day. This minimises lost learning time. Evidence of an appointment such as a letter or text reminder should be shown. Where a child does not return to school, following an early medical appointment, the following school session may be recorded as unauthorised.

8. Responding to non-attendance (safeguarding)

- If no voicemail message or other communication is received from parents by 9.30 am, the school will contact the parents using a minimum of two contact numbers on our records
- If we are unable to contact parents by lunchtime, if there is conflicting evidence around an absence, or if there is continued non-attendance beyond the time period the NHS guidelines state recommend for a particular illness, the Headteacher will be alerted and a home visit will be carried out by the Headteacher, or if appropriate, the Trafford Educational Welfare Team.

School Action – attendance concerns (short and long term)

Telephone call asking parents and other emergency contacts to let us know the reasons for absence if no contact has been made from home by 10.30 am

Welfare home visit by the Headteacher if no message received by lunchtime or there is conflicting evidence around the absence

Welfare Home visit by the Headteacher if the 3 day+ period of absence is disproportionate to the NHS guidance

Attendance monitored each half term by Headteacher and Attendance Officer to identify pupils causing concern
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Pre-Letter 1 – highlighting an attendance that is falling towards 90% or lower
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Letter 1 – initial letter with offer of support and informal meeting and notice of further monitoring.
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Letter 2 – no improvement at the next monitoring date, request to attend meeting with Headteacher and notice
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that your child will be discussed with Trafford Team Together at the next visit. Early Help may be offered.

Letter 3 – no improvement in attendance despite Letter 1 and Letter 2. Pupils will be discussed with Trafford Pupil Absence team with a view to taking further action – this will result in a warning letter, a request to attend a joint meeting or home visit and could result in a fixed penalty fine and court action. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

8. Parental requests for Leave of Absence during term-time

Changes to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 came into force in September 2013. These amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Details can be found here:

www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/Regulations-amendments

Our default school policy is that absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Term time is for learning. Children have 175 days off school for holidays and family events. We have a school holiday period approximately every six weeks in the United Kingdom and we expect that families will plan trips and visits in that time. We make our calendar available two years in advance to parents so that they can plan ahead.

At Moss Park Primary School we are aware that occasionally, exceptional circumstances may arise and parents and carers should be aware of the following guidance to Headteachers. Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive.

Key Principles at Moss Park Primary School

Any absence, even if it falls into the category of exceptional circumstances as detailed below, will not be authorised if it takes the pupils' attendance down to below 96%. This is the average attendance for primary school pupils in the United Kingdom. Attendance below this is classed as 'below average' and leaves pupils, following further absences or unforeseen illnesses, vulnerable to low attendance that puts them into the category of 'persistent absenteeism' (currently any attendance below 90%).

It is important to note that the Headteacher can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether the absence is authorised at all. The Headteacher's decision is final.

The principles for defining 'exceptional' are **Rare, Significant, Unavoidable and Short**. By 'Unavoidable', we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

- Absence during term time for a family holiday because it is cheaper, quieter or more convenient is not considered an exceptional circumstance
- Absence for a bereavement of a close family member (excluding a parent) is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave. Where extended leave is unauthorised but goes ahead, a fine will be applied
- Absence for important, recognised religious observances can be taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time – usually no more than 2 days, not extended leave
- Absence to visit family members are also not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours. Children may need time to visit a seriously ill relative, but if this takes a pupils' attendance down to below 96%, this will not be authorised.

- If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence
- A pupils' attendance record, including leave of absences taken, over the four years at Moss Park Primary School will be taken into account when making decisions
- The needs of families of Service personnel should be taken into account when returning from long, operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled school holiday time
- Families may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis
- Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities
- Occasionally, there are differing holiday dates for siblings in schools in the same area and this will be taken into account when considering requests for a leave of absence
- This does not apply to the High School/Primary School differing summer holiday pattern in which High Schools in the area always finish one week earlier in July – therefore this is **not** exceptional

Applying for a leave of absence

Parents should always read the school's policy before making the written request for a leave of absence so that they may make a considered view on whether the absence is likely to be accepted or denied. Should they feel their requests meets the criteria of 'exceptional circumstances' then further evidence may be requested.

Parents and carers must use the school's leave of application form, which is available from the Office or to download on the school website. This must be submitted 'for the attention of the Headteacher'. The Headteacher does not meet with parents to discuss individual cases as virtually all circumstances are covered in the guidance in section 8 of this policy. If the Headteacher feels there may be exceptional circumstances that need exploring, she will contact the parents for further information.

The evidence parents and carers will need to provide depends entirely on what type of leave from school they are applying for, for example:

- Flight tickets to confirm the length of stay
- Proof of an exceptional event taking place
- An official letter from an employer stating that you have been allocated a holiday and that this date is non-negotiable
- Proof of service for military personnel

If parents are unable to provide the evidence requested then the leave of absence will not be granted

Where parents take a leave of absence without the Headteacher's authorisation, a fixed penalty fine will be applied by **Trafford Council**. Trafford protocol states:

Any leave during the term time taken without the approval of the Headteacher will trigger a Penalty Notice after 8 missed sessions (4 days). Penalty Notices provide an alternative to prosecution and will offer parents and opportunity to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying £60 (per parent per child) if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid within 28 days.

If the penalty is not paid by the end of 28 days, the local authority must withdraw the notice, or commence proceedings for the offence to which the notice relates. The prosecution is not for the non-payment of the notice but is for failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

If we have reason to believe that parents have taken a leave of absence without authorisation, we will actively contact the parents and do a home welfare visit. This is for safeguarding purposes.

Should the absence extend beyond 4 weeks, the child's name may be taken off the school's roll and parents will have to go through Trafford Admissions if they want a place for their child in our school. Parents should be aware that a place may not be available as we are always oversubscribed.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyse attendance data provided by the Attendance Officer ▪ Consider requests for authorised absence in line with the school policy ▪ Authorise absence after it occurs when a satisfactory explanation is accepted ▪ To make decisions as to whether or not a child should be sent home through ill health ▪ Contact parents at the earliest risk of a problem to seek a positive outcome in addressing any attendance issues. ▪ Conduct Home visits if the absence remains unexplained, if we have a reason to believe that a family have taken an unauthorised leave of absence or if the period of absence is disproportionate to the NHS guidance ▪ Liaise with the Pupil Absence Team in Trafford on matters pertaining to attendance and punctuality ▪ Consider the use of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or lateness ▪ Complete witness statements on pupil absence for court use ▪ Prepare reports on whole school Attendance for the Governing Body on a termly basis
School Business Manager and Office Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daily checks on class register where a child is recorded as absent ▪ Make calls to parents when first day of absence contact has not been made by parents ▪ Accurately record attendance data daily using agreed codes ▪ Record late arrival, time and reason ▪ Consult with the Headteacher if there is a query around the circumstances of a pupil's absence ▪ Ensure reasons for absences are accurately recorded and details of illness are given ▪ Collect absence notes and record reasons for absence. ▪ Compile and update standard texts and letters re: % attendance, notification of reasons for absence and lateness and send to parents when necessary
Class teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a calm warm and welcoming start to each child's day to ensure all children are prepared for the day ▪ Registration of pupils at the start of morning and afternoon sessions by 9.00 am and within the first 5 minutes of the afternoon session ▪ Submit SIMS registers to the office immediately after completion ▪ Discuss attendance and punctuality at parent consultations ▪ Ensure individual incentives are used to re-engage children ▪ Consult with the Headteacher if there are concerns about a child's absence
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure their child attends daily and on time ▪ Keep the school fully informed on all matters that might affect attendance and their child in school ▪ Ensure there are at least two numbers for emergency contact purposes ▪ Telephone school on the first day of any absence to inform school of the specific reason for absence and daily throughout an absence period ▪ Work with the school to improve matters if attendance becomes a problem ▪ Give serious consideration to whether it is appropriate or necessary to request term time absence

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make application for any term time leave of absence prior to proposed dates and in line with the school's attendance policy
Governing Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. ▪ The Governing Body also has the responsibility for agreeing the Attendance policy, and for seeing that it is carried out by all parties ▪ The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures remain high ▪ The Attendance policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary

7. Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. Governors will, therefore, examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they possibly can be. The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Policy to be Reviewed: April 2024 or pending new legislation

Signed: (Headteacher)

Date: April 2023

Appendix 1 Moss Park Primary School Leave of Absence form