

Mawsley Community Primary School



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Ownership	FGB
Date reviewed by committee	3 rd July 2023
Adopted by Full Governing Board	3rd July 2023
Formal Review	Summer term 2024

1. Aims and ethos

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance
- Taking steps to reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, if they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is to develop a positive attitude towards school and to this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding place in which to learn.

A high level of attendance at school is essential for any child to reach their full educational potential. Every suitable opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. Please refer to section 6, 'Attendance monitoring', for details of these steps.

We will also make the best possible provision we reasonably can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school. Identified pupils with specific medical, therapy or Special Educational Needs or disability, who have a high level of absence, will be supported by strategies such as:

- Weekly monitoring of attendance and absence
- Working with the local authority to record such absences as authorised to reflect attendance as good as can be expected for these pupils and the school
- Providing home visits where appropriate
- Recognising that some pupils are not 'available for learning' and working with the local authority and other agencies to allocate provision which may not be within our school.

For further information on our policy for the education of children with medical needs and modified attendance please see the Medical Needs Policy.

Safeguarding is at the heart of all we do at Mawsley School and our attendance policy is a key element of our approach to safeguarding.

We take the issue of attendance very seriously and do all we can to ensure high attendance from all our pupils. Percentage rates for attendance are included in our data sheets for all pupils.

Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to adjust to school's daily routine and catch up on missed work and is brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

What is an acceptable attendance rate?

We set an attendance target every year. At Mawsley School, we expect our pupils to attend regularly, with an expectation of 97% attendance for each child. This is what we expect as minimum attendance percentage. If children are in school, they are learning. If they are learning they will make more progress and will not get left behind.

2. School procedures

Attendance register

We are required by law to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. Our Governing Board is therefore 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 is authorised or unauthorised.

Schools have a responsibility for safeguarding the children in their care and it is vital that the register information we have is as accurate as possible.

At Mawsley School, pupils must arrive by 8:50am, when the register will be taken. If a pupil arrives between 8:50 and 9:20 a.m. they will be recorded as arriving late. The register closes at 9:20am. Pupils arriving after that time will be marked as absent and attendance procedures will be followed. Pupils arriving after 8:50 a.m. should go directly to the school office. The afternoon register is taken at 12:55 In Reception and Key Stage 1 and 13:15 in Key Stage 2.

The attendance register will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity (such as field trips and educational visits)
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendments to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the Department for Education attendance codes, which we are required to use.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

Unplanned absence

A parents or carer must notify the school on the first day if their child is absent from school for any reason that has not been planned and approved by the school in advance. An example of an unplanned absence is where a child is unable to attend due to ill health.

Notification is made by telephoning the school, pressing 1 when prompted by the recorded information and leaving a message on the absence reporting line, by 8:50 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 5). Alternatively, parents or carers can speak directly to the child's class teacher or a member of the office staff (e.g. if they are in school to drop off another child). Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unless we think it is necessary to do so.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

Medical or dental appointments

Absence for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice, by email, letter or phone call, is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents may notify the class teacher / office in advance of a medical or dental appointment, verbally or through a letter, text / email notification of an appointment.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 3.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. If a child is persistently late, the school will work with the family to determine why and help towards finding a solution. Persistent lateness is defined as being late on more than three occasions within a half term.

Parents will be informed of this by the class teacher. Should lateness continue, a letter will be sent home to parents, followed by a meeting with a senior leader if there is no improvement, with lateness leading to lost learning time as the focus of the meeting.

Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If a child is absent unexpectedly, and no notification is received from the child's parent or carer as set out above, the class teacher will record the absence in the register and will inform the school office staff who will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian by text or phone as soon as possible in order to check on the safety of the child. If

there is a concern around a child's absence, a member of the safeguarding team will be contacted immediately. If a child is absent for 10 days or more consecutively without permission, we will inform the local authority, in accordance with our school's safeguarding policy. If a child is absent for 10 sessions within a 6 week period without permission, we will inform the local authority.

When the child returns to school after an unexpected absence, the parent or carer must confirm the reason for the child's absence, in a written note, to be handed to the school office or the class teacher or one that is sent via email. See Section 3 regarding procedures for authorised and unauthorised attendance.

Reporting to parents

An annual attendance report is sent to parents annually, as part of the child's end of year report.

3. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Absence is authorised if the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. The DfE has issued guidelines to all schools detailing the legitimate reasons for authorised absence including:

- When a child is ill or receiving medical attention (see above)
- Days of religious observance notified in advance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Absence due to family circumstances e.g. bereavement, serious illness
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for one of these legitimate reasons and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent has properly notified the school to explain the absence.

Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers are not permitted to grant any leave of absence to pupils for any reason during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

If you wish to make an application for term-time absence for your children, you must complete and send in to the headteacher a request form for leave of absence in term time (available from the school office) in good time before the proposed absence. We expect the application to be made not less than seven days before the start of the proposed absence unless there are urgent reasons that mean you cannot do so. The headteacher will consider the application based upon the relevant legal guidelines.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. We may request evidence to support your application. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible.

We strongly discourage holidays being taken in term time as learning is disrupted and the lost time is detrimental to the educational progress of the child.

DfE guidance makes it clear that the legislation regarding pupil attendance gives no entitlement to parents to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances. The headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave.

Where the headteacher authorises a child's absence from school, the headteacher may specify that the absence is approved for a specified period of time, determined by the headteacher.

Please note that if the headteacher does not authorise a leave of absence but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised.

Only the school can classify an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. Exceptional circumstances for absence will be at the Headteacher's discretion and will be determined on an individual basis.

Repeated unauthorised absence

Attendance monitoring is detailed in Section 5.

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school to discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Local Authority Education Inclusion Partnership Team who will investigate the circumstances of the home situation.

Legal sanctions

Please note that schools can provide evidence for the County Council to use to fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Local Authority, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

4. Strategies for promoting attendance

We aim to help all parents, guardians and children understand the importance of regular attendance to ensure progress in learning and as an expectation for the world of work. Any early warning signs of low attendance will be identified and followed up by the class teacher with the parent. At the end of every week, cumulative

attendance will be analysed. Every child with 100% attendance will receive an excellence values point. Any children who show improvements in their attendance will receive a determination values point. There are special certificates for children who have 100% attendance for the whole year.

5. Attendance monitoring

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance and to review and agree annually, the school's Attendance Policy. Governors will examine the information provided for them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

Pupils' attendance is monitored on a weekly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning of each day that their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2), unless they are able to inform the school that the child is likely to be off for a determined period of time.

If, after contacting parents, a pupil's absence continues to rise, some or all of the following steps may be taken, depending on the level of non-attendance and length of time attendance has been falling:

- A letter home to highlight the level of attendance and concern
- A request to attend a meeting with the Family Worker, Assistant Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher
- A request to attend a meeting with the Headteacher
- A request to attend a meeting with the Chair of Governors
- A referral to the Education Entitlement Team

The persistent absence threshold is 10% (this is set by the government). If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10% at any time, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. If no attempt is being made to improve attendance and the attendance has been unauthorised, a referral will be made to the Education Entitlement Team.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

Internal Monitoring of Absence Data

The internal monitoring of absence data will be in accordance with GDPR guidelines. Attendance data will be recorded via SIMS and tracked using an internal document to which staff will have access. The purpose of this is to identify individuals at risk of losing learning time through absence, as well as identifying key trends / contextual groups that may also be at risk. The evaluations of this will enable the school to support the children and families whose absence presents a concern so that we can positively raise their attendance and maximise exposure to learning time in the future.

6. Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. Attendance data and reports will be reviewed termly by the governors' Teaching, Learning and Outcomes Committee and through the monitoring undertaken each half-term by the nominated Attendance governor. All governors will be able to read the attendance data published in the school newsletter.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information promptly to the school office. They are also responsible for monitoring

attendance in their class and for following up absences. If there is a concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general concern about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher who will contact the parents or guardians. The class teacher also plays a very important role in promoting the importance of regular attendance through praise and encouragement.

Admin/office staff

Admin/office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record information on the school system. They are also expected to make contact via text, telephone, email or letter with parents and guardians when it is necessary to follow up concerns about absences.

8. Policy review arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually in the Summer term by the Headteacher and agreed by the Governing Board.

3. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy and the Medical Needs Policy.

4. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

C o d e	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

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Definition

Scenario

Authorised absence

C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

C o d e	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day