

Attendance Policy

In order for every child to progress well and achieve their potential, it is essential that they regularly attend school and are punctual. We actively promote high attendance figures and its' impact on learning through assemblies, in newsletters, on the school website and in parent feedback sheets at parents evening and end of year reports. School staff work with families to ensure attendance in school is at the highest possible level. We would like to see pupils as close to 100% as possible but understand that at times, we all get sick.

We strive to-

- Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 95%.
- Maintain parent/carer and pupils awareness of the importance of regular attendance.
- Display key information about attendance around the school and celebrate high attendance.

If a child attends school for 90% of the time they are absent from school for the equivalent of one half day a week. Over a school year they would miss four weeks (20 days) of lessons. If this attendance continued throughout eleven years of schooling, the equivalent of 209 days of school would have been missed, more than one year of school. Our target for each child is a minimum of 95%, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

School Attendance Regulations

School attendance regulations changed from 1st September 2013 under Education Regulations 2013; this document amended the 2006 regulations. As a result of the 2013 legislation, head teachers are not able to allow any holidays during term time. Any holiday taken will be treated as unauthorised regardless of the reasons for it.

The 2013 regulations allow head teachers to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. The following list gives examples of occasions where absence is authorised -

- Sickness / illness;
- Emergency and planned medical appointments – wherever possible parents are requested to make routine appointments outside school hours;
- Hospital scheduled appointments /treatment;
- Day/s for specific religious observance;
- When school is closed due to unforeseen circumstances;
- Family bereavement or close friend bereavement;
- Other compassionate grounds;
- Family wedding/civil partnership taking part on school day– this does not include travelling to the wedding unless it is abroad;
- Family crisis;
- Examinations off site;
- Educational opportunities e.g., sport and performance;
- Attendance at an event at the request of a public organisation;
- Visit to a new school;
- Family relocation visit.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

As from September 2015 a pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately via the 1st attendance letter.

Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to a period of monitoring, followed by a parenting contract if no improvement in attendance and then support via an outside agency, for example, an Early Help Assessment.

Requests for Absence

All requests for absence must be made by completing the 'Request for Absence in Term Time' form which can be collected as a hard copy from the school office. The executive head teacher reviews each request and decides if it meets the criteria for authorisation. Parents should keep their copy of the authorisation in case they are required to prove their child has authorised absence during term time.

The local authority has been given jurisdiction to impose fines for unauthorised absence and schools may be asked to report unauthorised absence. For absence relating to illness of five days or more, or once if a child is part of attendance monitoring or parent contract, schools may request a doctor's note to confirm the absence (costs covered by the family). Like all UK schools, Milton Parochial Primary School is bound by the changes in government legislation and makes every effort to comply with the attendance regulations.

Any family with a child's attendance rate of less than 95% should expect to have a letter from the executive head teacher and /or a meeting to consider ways to improve this. Attendance of all pupils is monitored termly and more regularly where there have been concerns.

Parents will be kept informed of their child's attendance figures in the term 3 interim report and as part of the end of year written report. We use colour coding and a class percentage in the weekly newsletter to keep parents informed.

Procedures for Notifying Absence

If a child is absent from school for illness or for an emergency, parents / carers are asked to telephone the school early in the morning on the first day of absence, send a message into school with a responsible adult or write an email.

Failure to communicate the reason for absence could result in the child's record being marked as an unauthorised absence which could lead to a fine by the local authority. The school determines whether or not an absence is authorised.

First Day Response

The school operates a first day response to absence; we will call parents if we have not heard from them by 9:15am. We believe it is our responsibility to ensure a child's safety as well as his/her regular school attendance to have the best possible education.

If we do not receive an explanation for the absence on the student's return to school, or if the explanation doesn't fall into the authorised absence criteria, the absence may not be recorded as authorised. Written, text or phone-call confirmation is expected from parents/carers to cover the whole period of the absence.

If there is response to the school's phone call within 10 days, the school will contact the Educational Welfare Officer and follow the child missing from education procedures.

Late Arrivals

The start of the day across the school is 8.55 a.m. Pupils who are late, after 9:05 a.m., must report to the school office where they will be marked in the register as late and taken to class by a member of the school staff. To minimise disruption to class, parent are requested to stay at the school office rather than accompany their child into class.

If the child's arrival at school is later than 9.25am, they will be marked as an unauthorised absence. Whilst it is recognised that there may occasionally be unexpected traffic or circumstances for lateness, these incidences are still recorded as late in the register.

If a child is persistently late, the executive head teacher will send a letter and/or request a parent meeting to consider ways to improve this. Lateness has a negative effect on learning for the child and can also impact on the class group.

Local Authority support for absence

Education Inclusion Officers provide a service to the school on all social problems encountered by pupils, including advice and support on a variety of procedures and legislation. EIOs have expertise in attendance related matters and the causes of persistent absenteeism. Absences that meet the criteria below for issuing a fixed penalty notice will be reported to the local authority. Support will be offered to families using this service to resolve unacceptable levels of absence.

The local authority is NOT part of the authorisation process and their decision to consider the issue of fixed penalty notices is based on information submitted by schools.

Penalty notices can be issued under the following circumstances as an alternative to Magistrates' Court proceedings. However we would expect schools to follow their attendance procedures in identifying the issues and putting support in place.

Penalty notices for non-school attendance - To issue a penalty notice, there should be 5 days (10 sessions) or more unauthorised absences in a 6 week period.

Penalty notices for term time absence - To issue a penalty notice, there should be 5 days (10 sessions) or more of consecutive unauthorised absence.