

# Manor Park Primary School



## Attendance & Exceptional Leave Policy

**Agreed by Governors: September 2018**

**Shared with all Staff: September 2018**

**Frequency of Review: 3 Years**

**Date of Next Review: September 2021**

**Designated Safeguarding Lead: Jill O'Connor - Headteacher**

**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Sarah Jacoby – Assistant Headteacher, Deb Perkins – Senior Learning Mentor**

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## **AIM**

To ensure that children receive their full entitlement to education through teaching and learning by punctual and maximum regular attendance.

## **WE SEEK TO ACHIEVE THIS BY:**

### **Encouraging parents to -**

- notify the school in advance of any impending absence, providing written evidence if appropriate, e.g. hospital letter,
- inform the school immediately of the reason for any absence, keeping the school updated on a daily basis during the period of absence and providing firm medical evidence to support absence of 5 days or over,
- ensure their children attend school every day,
- take annual leave during school holidays,
- to ensure that their child arrives on time,
- provide children with appropriate school resources e.g. PE kit and book bag.

### **Encouraging pupils to –**

- develop their own motivation to attend regularly and punctually,
- organise their equipment for each day e.g. swimming, homework, reading book and log.

### **Raising Senior Leaders, Teachers, Learning Mentors and Administrative Staff awareness of pupils who -**

- are absent, and the reason for the absence,
- arrive late and to look for any pattern of arrival times,
- provide the right degree of support and encouragement dependent upon the known social / family circumstances of the child.

### **Providing Support and Information to –**

- ensure that teachers and supply teachers are aware of the procedures for marking and maintaining registers accurately,
- ensure that learning mentors and administrative staff are aware of the procedures for maintaining accurate records and supply detailed data for analysis to Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher on a weekly or daily basis as required,
- ensuring that parents are aware of the school procedures,
- produce statistical evidence about rates and patterns of absence for Governors, Local Authority and Ofsted and to inform the school's internal process of intervention strategies for school attendance improvement.

### **Involving other agencies –**

the school recognises that good attendance is a team effort and therefore appreciates and uses the expertise of the Local Authority Attendance Officer, School Nurse, Early Help Assessment co-ordinator, Learning Mentors, 'Time for You' Counsellor, the local Coventry City Council, Education Directorate and Social Care and other agencies working with the families.

## **PROVIDING INFORMATION TO PARENTS**

The importance placed upon regular attendance and punctuality is explained and discussed with parents when they first enrol their children at school. Parents are asked to sign and agree to an attendance code of conduct when they enrol their child at our school.

Information relating to school terms, holidays, school hours and sessions, are regularly issued via the newsletter along with the class with the highest attendance in each phase of school. This information is also published on the schools' website which is updated weekly.

Pupil's attendance is regularly monitored, and parents are contacted daily. This is initially by telephone but can be by home visit and /or by letter, but if the problem persists they are then invited in to school to discuss the situation with members of the School's Learning Mentor Team. If attendance and or punctuality do not improve then the Head Teacher will meet with parents and if required will initiate the involvement of the appropriate external agencies.

Progress and attainment issues which stem from poor attendance are formally raised at parents' evenings and comments made in the child's annual written report.

## **SCHOOL PROSPECTUS**

All parents, when enrolling their child, receive a copy of the school prospectus which gives details of the following:

- school terms and holidays,
- school hours and sessions,
- the time for arrival at school before the morning and afternoon session,
- the procedure for informing school about absence,
- the need for punctuality,
- the criteria for authorised absence for exceptional circumstance,
- information about absences which qualify as unauthorised absences e.g. within term time,
- information regarding school attendance statistics and unauthorised absence numbers which are shown as percentages,
- any targets relating to school attendance.

## **GOVERNORS'**

The Governors' Termly Report includes information concerning unauthorised absences and the whole school attendance, alongside the attendance trends. Information regarding punctuality, trends and strategies to support are also provided.

## **NEWSLETTERS**

Parents are reminded on a half termly basis of the need for good punctuality and attendance. Celebrations of class and individual attendance successes are also celebrated regularly.

## **TRAINING FOR TEACHERS AND THEIR ROLES OF RESPONSIBILITY**

Meetings for teachers where required provide opportunities for staff to:

- receive training and updating of information on procedures for marking registers,
- discuss methods and develop strategies for encouraging pupils to be punctual and attend school every day,
- receive training in order to follow the guidelines for noting and recording absence and lateness,
- share information about pupils who are late or absent who are a cause for concern.

## **REMOVAL FROM ROLL**

In the event of a school transfer, or a pupil moving to another area, a pupil will normally remain on roll until notification is received from the receiving school.

If a pupil has stopped attending school and no notification has been given of a school transfer request, the school will make every effort to locate the pupil in conjunction with the Local Authority. If unsuccessful, a Missing Person form must be completed and sent to the Local Authority. Should no further notification be received after 20 working days, the school may delete the pupil from its roll.

If a pupil fails to return to school following an unauthorised absence they may also be removed from roll after a period of 20 school days of absence. The school must make reasonable enquiries to locate the pupil and ascertain the reasons for absence before removal from roll and a letter must be written to the parents informing them of this action. A "Children Missing from Education Referral Form", must also be sent to the Children and Family First Team.

### **LATE ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL**

Rigorous systems to encourage, support and enforce prompt attendance are employed.

Parents are informed and reminded of the school dates and times in a number of different ways during the year in the school information provided. It is emphasised regularly to parents that poor punctuality gives the pupil who is late a difficult and negative start to their day and disrupts the teaching and learning of the whole class. The importance of the registration time in school as a time for greetings, and early morning learning is stressed to parents.

The school gates will be locked promptly at 8.55am every morning. Any child who arrives late, after 8.55am, must sign in at the school office and an accurate log of their time of arrival and the reason for their late arrival is made. These logs can be used as evidence if a prosecution through court proceedings is initiated as a result of persistent absence or for persistent lateness a referral to Social Care for neglect may be made.

### **EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Manor Park School recognises that a pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their learning: as a result, parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. As from September 2013 amendments to the Governments regulations state clearly that Head Teachers are no longer allowed to authorise holidays or grant leave of absence in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and this discretion should be used sparingly. **All requests for leave of absence must be discussed at a meeting with the Head Teacher first**, after a LOA form with the request has been received. An appointment will be arranged by our Attendance Officer, Pat Hull. Prior to any absence, at least 4 weeks' notice is expected for any planned absence. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. An absence that has not been agreed by the Head Teacher will be recorded as unauthorised. The Head Teacher would not normally authorise any holidays taken in term time. Only exceptional leave of absence circumstances, as determined by the Head Teacher, will be authorised. (See Appendix D)

The reason for the leave of absence will be explored with parents to consider any possible safeguarding risks, i.e. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and the PREVENT agenda.

### **PENALTY NOTICES**

The Head Teacher has the right to apply to the Local Authority for the issue of Penalty Notices. The Penalty Notice is for £60.00 per parent, per child if paid with 21 days and £120.00 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days. A Penalty Notice can be applied for regarding any parent/carer whose school age child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence recorded in any 5-week period, this includes unauthorised holidays taken in term time. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice could result in Coventry City Council starting legal proceedings.

### **SUPPORT FOR PUPILS**

Pupils receive encouragement from their teachers for being punctual and achieving good attendance. The staff respond to absence and lateness in accordance with the age and social circumstances of the child. Unacceptable lateness and attendance is dealt with through the parents rather than the children for the vast majority of cases.

### **TRAINING FOR CLERICAL STAFF, LEARNING MENTORS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Learning Mentors/Clerical staff will -

- receive all relevant information and guidelines with regard to attendance,
- be encouraged to attend relevant courses,
- be fully aware of the procedures which operate within the SIMS Attendance Module,

- contact the Local Authority for attendance advice when required.

## **HEAD TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Head Teacher is responsible for -

- providing opportunities for staff training,
- providing information about unauthorised absences for publication, and maintaining a high level of attendance and punctuality by encouraging pupils and parents to take personal responsibility,
- contacting parents in cases –
  - \* where absence from school has not been supported by contact with the school, i.e. If a child is absent from school and the school are unable to make contact with them or an emergency contact, the school may carry out 'safe and well' checks at the family home. If are unable to make contact and we are concerned about the family we may make contact with other professionals already involved with the family or make referrals to external agencies, e.g. The Children and Families First team (CFFT), Social Care, or the Police
  - \* when the pattern of absence is seen to be regular,
  - \* where punctuality is a cause for concern,
- contacting the Local Authority Attendance Officer and Early Help Assessment co-ordinator for advice-
  - \* when no satisfactory outcome has been achieved after consulting parents,
  - \* when absence or lateness gives increasing cause for concern,
  - \* where there are continuous pupil absences, with no suitable reasons provided.

## **Appendix A. - Procedures for encouraging attendance.**

There is a very important role for the development of positive encouragement and celebration of good attendance.

At Manor Park, we believe that it is important to celebrate good attendance and punctuality, which are important life-skills. We celebrate attendance in the following ways:

- The percentage attendance for each class is shared weekly as part of assembly and a weekly Attendance Cup awarded to the class with the best attendance for that week.
- Individual rewards for children achieving a full term of 100% attendance - certificates and badges will be awarded to these children to celebrate their efforts.
- Children who have achieved 100% attendance in any term will then be entered into a prize draw at the end of the academic year, with the chance to win a very special prize.
- Any class achieving 100% attendance, with no late marks, across a whole week will be awarded a cash prize to spend on a treat.
- The class achieving the best attendance in a term, will be rewarded with a non-uniform day and a treat to celebrate.

The newsletter is used to report the attendance level and punctuality figures to parents and to ensure that the profile of this issue is maintained.

Children with particularly poor attendance and /or punctuality are identified, parents/carers are notified, support meetings are arranged (involving external agencies where appropriate) and 'Individual Attendance Improvement Plans' with goals are set up where necessary and monitored weekly. Overall % attendance targets are set for the end of term etc. and incentive rewards given for meeting these goals.

Where persistent absence and or poor punctuality continues, the school will seek the advice of the Local Authority regarding, Parenting Contracts and legal proceedings and /or referral to Social Care.



98%-100% = Outstanding Attendance



95%-98% = Good Attendance



90-95% = Attendance Requires Improvement



85%-90% = Attendance Concern



0%-85% = Attendance Serious Concern/Inadequate

## **Appendix B. - Tracking Poor Attendance and Punctuality.**

Detailed records are essential in monitoring the attendance levels of the school and of individual pupils. Alongside this should be a close working relationship with the Children and Families First Worker (Schools) and the school's linked CAF Co-ordinator.

The monitoring systems for the school are: -

- All absences require explanation. We expect all parents to notify us by 8.30am, why their child is not in school, this should be done by either calling the school and leaving a voice message on the answer phone or alternatively by coming into main reception and speaking to a member of staff. In some circumstances, we will call parents back, either because the voice message left was not clear or because the reason provided for absence cannot be authorised.
- All pupils with unexplained absence will receive a First Day Call from a member of the Admin Team, if we are unable to make contact with a parent/guardian then we may call any emergency contacts that we hold for the family, along with sending a text using the 'School Comms' system, if we are not able to make contact with the family and are concerned we may carry out a Safe and Well Check at the family address. These checks can take place throughout the day, or the period of absence.
- If we are still unable to contact the family or are concerned that the reason provided for absence cannot be authorised then contact with other professionals involved with the family may take place, we may also make referrals to external agencies such as the Early Help Hub, Social Care or the Police.
- We will make regular telephone call to all families for children with longer absences due to illness to check how the child is, to see if there is anything we can do and also to discuss next steps, i.e. if it is expected that the absence will continue for the whole week (5 school days) then we would inform the parents that we will be expecting firm medical evidence for the absence and without it, a penalty notice may be considered.
- Where there is no acceptable explanation for absence given, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Below 90% Attendance Reports are taken from SIMS each week. Parents of pupils with unsatisfactory attendance are made aware of this and support offered through; Attendance Letters, informal and formal meetings, CAF (Common Assessment Framework Support) support, along with referrals to the Early Help Hub and or other agencies if necessary.
- Punctuality Awareness Letters are sent to parents whose children are regularly late, along with targeted text messages that are sent to parents.
- All identified children with poor attendance are monitored weekly and are supported on an individual basis to ensure ongoing improvements.
- At least half-termly, Local Authority Attendance Officer and the Early Help Support co-ordinator, will visit the school and monitor poor attendance and support for vulnerable pupils and discuss intervention strategies.
- The Local Authority Attendance Officer and Early Help Support co-ordinator will discuss with the Safeguarding Team any particular concerns and issues around individual families and discuss support and intervention strategies. At times they will work alongside the school to offer support to families and where appropriate take families to their allocation panel to be assigned a worker.
- Where attendance concerns constitute safeguarding issues for pupils, Social Care will always be informed, and referrals made.
- Under particularly challenging circumstance the Local Authority Attendance Officer will set up Parenting Contracts, issue letters warning of prosecution and if this still fails to illicit improvement will seek LA approval to prosecute.

**Appendix D - Exceptional Leave of Absence Codes – C/G/O HEAD TEACHER WILL REQUEST TO MEET WITH PARENTS 4 WEEKS PRIOR TO INTENDED LEAVE**

Manor Park Primary School describes Authorised Exceptional Extended Leave of Absence Circumstances  
**HEAD TEACHER MAY REQUEST TO MEET WITH PARENTS 4 WEEKS PRIOR TO INTENDED LEAVE Code C** as;

- Extreme safeguarding issues, e.g. fleeing into refuge situation, until alternative schooling arrangements can be made.
- Leave requested following the death of a parent or carer.
- Funeral of a parent/carer.
- Occasional education linked extra curricula activities when all factors such as the nature of the event/activity, frequency and the child's attendance, attainment, key stage and ability to catch up on missed schooling are taken into account.

Manor Park Primary School describes Unauthorised Circumstances  
**HEAD TEACHER WILL REQUEST TO MEET WITH PARENTS 4 WEEKS PRIOR TO INTENDED LEAVE Code G** as;

- Holidays taken in term time through parental choice or for economic reasons

Manor Park Primary School describes Unauthorised Circumstances  
**HEAD TEACHER WILL REQUEST TO MEET WITH PARENTS 4 WEEKS PRIOR TO INTENDED LEAVE Code O** as;

- Any other unauthorised absence from school.