



<b>POLICY NAME:</b>	<b>Attendance Policy</b>
Frequency of review:	1 year
Reviewed On:	June 2023
Reviewed By:	KKowalska
Next review (date):	June 2024

## **Morley Memorial Primary School Attendance Policy**

### **1. Aims and Objectives – Our policy aims to**

- Emphasise the importance to all students and families that maximum attendance at school is vital for achieving their full potential.
- Reinforce the notion that every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled and that parents are responsible in law for the regular and punctual attendance of their child.
- Make explicit to all (students, parents, carers, staff) the schools' expectations on attendance levels and support strategies to help students maximise their attendance.
- Emphasise the need for home and school to work in partnership to achieve high attendance.
- Promote a consistent approach across the school towards attendance matters.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties linked to attendance at school and in the local authority.

We aim for 100% attendance for all children.

We aim to improve the achievement of pupils by:

- promoting high levels of attendance and punctuality across the school community
- creating an ethos in which attendance and punctuality are recognised and valued
- expecting children attend every day, on time, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence
- encouraging good habits of punctuality and attendance from Early Years to Year 6
- supporting parents and children to improve attendance

**All staff** - are expected to be excellent role models by having outstanding attendance and punctuality records.

## 2. The law regarding regular school attendance and punctuality:

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers of a child of compulsory school age (the term after the child turns five) are under a legal duty to ensure that their child receives full-time education; and, that they have a legal duty to ensure the regular attendance and punctuality of that child at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and September 2013 make clear that Head teachers may not authorise holidays (or other Leave of Absence) in term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances. The school upholds these regulations and supports the use of financial penalties and court action where necessary.

## 3. Procedures and Practices

### Registration

Roll call registration (electronic) takes place twice a day.

In the morning, registration begins at 9:00 a.m. and registers are closed at 9:10 a.m.

In the afternoon, registration takes place during the first 10 minutes after lunch break (timing dependent on year group timetable).

### Lateness

Any student arriving in school after registration has been taken will be recorded as **L** (late). If they arrive after registration period has finished they will be recorded as **U** (unauthorised absence). Any child who arrives after 9.10 will be categorised as **U** (unauthorised absence). Unauthorised absence at the beginning of the day is particularly damaging to a child's academic and social progress and for this reason will be treated very seriously by the school and the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

Where students show a persistent pattern of lateness, Parents/Carers will initially receive a letter informing them of the school's concerns. This will advise Parent/Carers to speak to a member of staff to help address the issue. Should the lateness continue, Parent/Carers will be invited to a meeting at school to discuss their child's lateness.

If there is no improvement, despite the school's attempts to address unauthorised absences, a referral could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAO) for pupils who are of statutory school age.

### Absences

Absences from school will be either Authorised or Unauthorised depending upon circumstance.

**Authorised absences** are where a student has been absent and a satisfactory and legal reason has been communicated to the school via a teacher, direct to the attendance team or whilst representing the school / educational visit. Other reasons include: genuine illness, days of religious observance, unavoidable medical appointments, exceptional circumstances (bereavement / marriage of immediate family member or traveller children going 'on the road'). The school expects authorised absences to be kept to a minimum and therefore routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours or during school holidays wherever possible. **Where absence through illness has led to attendance of below 95%, parents/carers may be asked to provide evidence of illness and/or appointments.**

Children who are unable to attend school due to vomiting and/or diarrhoea can return after they have been 48 hours clear.

**Unauthorised absences** are when no letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parents / carers or the reason provided is not deemed as acceptable by the school. Examples of these may be lateness after the end of registration, attending a birthday celebration, minding a house, caring for a sibling, shopping, lack of childcare, visiting relatives or going on holiday.

The school, using DfE guidelines, makes the final decision about whether or not any absence is seen as authorised or unauthorised. Parents who wish to request absence may do so by completing an absence request form (available from School Office, the school website and in Appendix 2) and returning it to the school office before the absence occurs. Authorisation cannot be granted retrospectively.

### **Term-Time Leave**

The school strongly discourages taking children out of school for any reason during term time, including holidays, as learning is disrupted and the lost time is detrimental to the educational progress of the child. Morley Memorial Primary School follows the DfE guidelines which state that requests for long-term leave can only be granted in 'exceptional circumstances' and decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. No term time leave will be granted, or deemed granted without a formal request on the appropriate forms (available from School Office, the school website and in Appendix 2) is received and a written (including via email) response given. Interviews following a request may be conducted prior to any decision being made. The school will not authorise any leave, including holidays, retrospectively and may follow up any reported illness that we feel may have been a term time holiday.

### **Absence Request form available in Appendix 2**

The following paragraph is taken from the 'Cambridgeshire Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, April 2023', which is followed by Morley Memorial Primary School.

### **Unauthorised term time leave (includes holiday)**

***Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave for 6 consecutive sessions (3 days) or more, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a Penalty Notice. Therefore Penalty Notices will be issued for single event absences of at least 3 consecutive school days or more where these absences are unauthorised because they are neither exceptional nor unavoidable.***

*The absences must be recorded with a 'G' code in the attendance register. Such cases will have to be supported by evidence of parents being warned about a potential Penalty Notice. (The Supreme Court Judgement in the case between Isle of Wight Council v Platt (6th April 2017) clarified the meaning of regular school attendance in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996. To attend school "regularly" means "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".)*

*Contrary to the above criteria of 3 days of absence to warrant a Penalty Notice fine being issued, in exceptional circumstances where a parent takes a child out of school during term time for an extended period (20 days or more), not authorised by the school, prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may be considered as an alternative to a Penalty Notice fine being issued.*

*If 3 or more term time leave Penalty Notices have been issued over a 3 year period then prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may be considered as an alternative to a Penalty Notice fine being issued. "*

Note:

- 6 sessions or 3 days means 3 consecutive school days, including spanning a weekend, or school holiday
- The definition of parent in relation to a Penalty Notice includes the Step-parent and the partner of a parent who lives in the same household.

#### 4. Strategies used to support and improve attendance at school

**Students** must attend regularly (minimum of 95%) and punctually (before 9:00)

##### **Parents**

Parents/carers (or whichever adult the student lives or is staying with) are legally responsible for the child's attendance at school and must ensure that students attend, regularly, on time, in correct attire and with correct equipment. They could be subject to criminal prosecution should their child's attendance fall below acceptable levels.

We expect parents to:

- Telephone or email school on or before the first and each day of their child's absence to notify of the absence (before 10am)
- Provide satisfactory medical evidence when required to do so e.g. appointment card or SMS notification from GP Surgery, hospital appointment letter etc
- Attend attendance planning meetings when requested to do so with staff from school and the Local Authority Attendance Officer when necessary.

##### **School**

School will;

Roll call registration twice a day (am and pm)

- Contact the parent/carer by telephone or email on the first day of absence if no notification is received.
- Monitor attendance when necessary.
- Use the [Local Authority 'Step-by-Step' system](#) to communicate with parents highlighting absence and requesting explanations.
- Investigate unexplained absences **(if no satisfactory evidence is received within 10 days, the absence will remain recorded as unauthorised)**.
- Hold attendance planning meetings to discuss how school can support parents/carers to improve attendance and to set targets.
- Include attendance information on progress reports.
- Report all children whose attendance falls below 90% to the LA (as per statutory requirements)
- May also refer to the Local Authority Attendance Officer when attendance falls below 90%

##### **The Local Authority (LA)**

The local authority (Cambridgeshire County Council) holds the statutory responsibility for school attendance for pupils in all Cambridgeshire schools. Local Authority Attendance Officers act on behalf of the LA to promote attendance and in partnership with schools, enforce attendance through the use of legal sanctions when necessary.

The Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO), will;

- Liaise with schools to help identify children whose attendance is unacceptable
- Write to parents requesting their attendance at planning meetings, parenting contract meetings and Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) meetings as appropriate
- Hold planning meetings with schools and parents to assist with the planning to meet attendance targets.
- Carry out home visits when appropriate.
- Carry out assessments and broker supportive interventions from a range of external agencies such as the locality team (family work, youth support) when necessary.
- Request the imposition of legal sanctions such as penalty notices, parent contracts, education attendance orders and fines.

## 5. Additional information

### Links to other policies

The importance of good attendance at school has a major link to other policies in school. The main policies that directly link or mention attendance include:

- Teaching and Learning,
- Assessment, Feedback and Marking Policy
- Behaviour
- Safeguarding
- Inclusion

<http://www.morley.cambs.sch.uk/our-school/policies/>

### Useful Guidance and Websites

Further guidance relating to attendance is recommended to all staff, parents, carers and governors can be found in the following publications

[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/schools](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/schools)

#### Cambridgeshire

Information for Parents and Carers Education: rights and responsibilities

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities>

General Attendance Expectations

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities/school-attendance>

Attendance and the Law

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities/non-attendance-and-the-law>

The CCC Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (April 2023) is available on above link,

#### DfE

School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

### Appendices

Appendix 1 – School Register Codes

Appendix 2 – Term Time Leave request form

## Appendix 1 – School Register codes

The DfE offers a comprehensive set of register codes which all schools are required to use. These codes are as follows:

- / \ - Present am/pm
- B - Educated off site - Approved Educational Activity (not dual registration)
- C - Other authorised circumstances
- D - Dual registration (i.e pupil attending other establishment)
- E - Excluded -
- G - Family holiday (not agreed)
- H - Family holiday (agreed)
- I - Illness (not medical/dental appointments)
- J - Interview
- L - Late (before registers close)
- M - Medical/Dental appointments
- N - No reason yet provided for absence
- O - Unauthorised Absence
- P - Approved Sporting Activity
- R - Religious Observance
- S - Study Leave
- T - Traveller child travelling
- U - Late (after registers closed)
- V - Educational visit or trip.
- Wb - Work experience
- Y - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- X - Non-compulsory school age
- Z - Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances.
- # - School closed – not counted in possible attendance.

Teachers are only required to use a limited number of the codes. The attendance team, Office Manager and attendance lead should be consulted before entering codes that are different to those on the default settings via the electronic registration system.

## Appendix 2

# Morley Memorial Primary School

## Request for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances



Unless it is an emergency please complete and return this form to the school office at least one week prior to the requested dates of absence. Permission cannot be granted retrospectively

At Morley Memorial Primary School, we are committed to giving all our children every opportunity to do well at school. As such, we believe that regular attendance at school is essential to enable children to make progress. Holidays in term time are **not** an entitlement. As a result of the inevitable disruption caused to learning if holidays are taken during term time, and in line with Local Authority guidance, we **do not** authorise holidays in term time. Absence may be granted, at the discretion of the headteacher, in very **exceptional circumstances**.

**To be considered 'an exceptional circumstance' the request must be for a short period of absence, rare and unavoidable.**

Exceptional circumstances might include:

- Days of religious observance
- Hospital appointments which cannot be scheduled for out of school hours
- External examinations or school transfer visits
- There has recently been a death or significant other trauma in the family and travel is required
- The parent is a member of the armed forces on leave from active duty abroad and can only have family holiday during this period.

The school provides a calendar of school term and holiday dates so that parents/carers are appropriately informed and given enough notice so that they can **book holiday/time off from work to coincide with school holidays (of which there are usually 13 weeks spread throughout the year)**.

If the school does not grant permission and parents/carers take their child on holiday, the absence will be classified as **unauthorised** absence, that is, as **truancy**, and the matter may be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Officer who may begin legal proceedings.

**Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave for 6 consecutive sessions (3 school days) or more, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a Penalty Notice.**

Name of child..... Class.....

I request a leave of absence for my child from..... to .....(a total of ..... days)

The exceptional circumstances for this absence are:

.....

Signature of parent/carers..... Date.....

### Office use only

The pupil's current attendance is: \_\_\_\_\_%

a) Permission is given

b) Permission is not given for the above leave of absence because it does not meet the criteria of exceptional circumstance

c) Other.....

Signed..... (Headteacher) Date.....