



# Attendance

<b>Adopted On:</b>	February 2021
<b>Review Date:</b>	February 2024
<b>Review Frequency:</b>	Every 3 Years
<b>Approved By:</b>	Headteacher

## **Introduction**

The school staff and governors firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Our Designated Attendance Officer is Victoria Abbott (Headteacher)

## **Expectations**

### **We expect that all pupils will:**

- attend school regularly, punctually and prepared appropriately for the day;

### **We expect that all parents or carers who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:**

- provide contact details for parents/carers and additional emergency contacts for their child
- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the children in their care arrive at school punctually and prepared for the school day;
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child is unable to attend school;
- contact the school on the first day of a child's absence and each and every day they are absent;
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school;
- not take holidays in term time;
- make appointments (where possible) outside of school hours.

### **We expect that school staff will:**

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, in the morning and afternoon;
- monitor every pupil's attendance;
- contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil is absent where no message has been received;
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence;
- encourage good attendance and punctuality;
- make initial enquiries of parents or carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's expectations with regard to regular school attendance.
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the South West Inclusion Service.

### **Encouraging Attendance**

Moss Lane School encourages regular attendance in the following ways by;

- providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils;
- monitoring attendance;
- publishing and displaying attendance statistics;
- celebrating good and improved attendance;

### **Understanding Types of Absence**

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as authorised:

- Illness
- unavoidable medical appointments
- exceptional circumstances / emergencies

or unauthorised:

- holidays / day trips
- absences which have not been properly explained
- looking after other children
- birthdays
- truancy before or during the school day
- keeping children off school unnecessarily
- reluctance / refusal to attend school

This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If a child is reluctant or refuses to attend school, we will work with the family to understand the root cause. We have a number of strategies available to help reluctant children including working with our Home-School Link Worker (HSLW), School Nurse and other outside agencies. The child needs to attend school even if they are reluctant or refuses, and we would expect parents to encourage and reassure their child. By them attending school we are able to work with them to overcome their anxiety. School will authorise long term absence relating to mental health if a doctor's note has been provided.

### **Persistent Absence**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling over the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will be damaging the child's education. We will work with the parents / carers to resolve this. Any family whose child is at or near the persistent absence mark will offered support through the HSLW, School Nurse or South West Inclusion Service.

### **Lateness**

Please note that, if pupils arrive after the school start time (08.57) they will be recorded as late (L). School registers are closed at 9.30am and pupils arriving after this time will be recorded 'as late after close of register' (U) which counts as an unauthorised absence for that session. Persistent lateness will be monitored and letters sent to parents where applicable. If lateness remains a problem a referral may be made to the Inclusion Officer.

### **Illness**

If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact the school on each and every day of absence by 9.15am either in person or by telephone. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure.

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments that must be in school time. An Absence Request Form for these absences should be completed in advance wherever possible.

### **Responding to Non-Attendance**

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- if no note or telephone call is received from the parent or carer by 09.15 the school will endeavour to contact them;
- if the school is unable to contact the parent /carer the school will continue to try. In the meantime, the school will also contact alternative contacts held for the pupils in order to establish the pupil's whereabouts.
- Should there be pre-existing concern about a child's welfare, or in the case that no contact can be made to establish why a child is absent from school, a member of School Leadership will attend the address of the pupil. If we are still unable to establish the whereabouts of the child, the police or other linked professionals may be called to support the school.
- the school will continue to try to contact the parent or carer and invite them into school to discuss their concerns.
- the school will tell parents that if the absence persists that a referral will be made to the South West Inclusion Service;
- monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the South West Inclusion Service if the irregular attendance continues.
- failure to comply with the expectations set by the South West Inclusion Service may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

### **Pupils Leaving During the School Day**

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school;
- Wherever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside school time;
- Parents are requested to advise the school, by completing the Absence Request Form, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time;
- Pupils must come to the office to be signed out by their parent/carers on leaving the school and to be signed back in on their return;

### **Dental and Medical Treatments**

Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school should be notified of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

### **Requests for Leave of Absence During Term Time**

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence during term-time for their child as a right and authorisation cannot be given retrospectively. Permission for absence during term time is at the school's discretion and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If a family needs to request absence in term-time then an application for leave of absence form should be obtained from the school office, completed and submitted to the Headteacher. The Headteacher may consult with the Chair of Governors and other local schools (in cases where leave has also been requested for siblings) and will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence requested. Each request will be considered separately and a decision made based on the reasons for each request.

### **Family Holidays**

The school holiday dates and end of Key Stage Assessment dates are published well in advance and are available from the school office and on the school website. Family holidays need to be booked within the school holiday dates. Family holidays are not deemed exceptional circumstances. In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations, holidays during term time will NOT be authorised.

### **Changing Schools**

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform Moss Lane School staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address, if relevant

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Inclusion Service.

### **Targets**

Targets for the school are set at the beginning of the year with the Inclusion Officer and Headteacher. Moss Lane School expects every child to have 100% attendance unless there are very exceptional circumstances. We will keep parents updated regularly on their child's progress and attendance. This is because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling. Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

### **Penalty Notices**

The Education Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider prosecuting the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

### **Circumstances when Penalty Notices may be issued**

**The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment)Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.**

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the headteacher, **each parent** may be liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they may be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Inclusion will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

**With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

### **Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions**

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

## **DELETIONS FROM REGISTERS**

Schools to be aware there is legislation around taking children off roll (Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and 2013).

- If a child moves schools during the year, they come off roll on the day they start the new provision.
- If the parent puts in writing that they intend to home educate, the matter should be referred to EHE and a copy of the letter attached. If the case is open to Inclusion a copy of the letter should be provided to the IO. The child can only be taken off roll if the parent specifies in writing that they intend to home educate.
- If the parent advises that they are moving abroad and school have any reason to suppose that this might not be true they should refer the matter to the Inclusion Service to investigate. Otherwise it is good practice to request this advice in writing from the parent so that this letter can be placed on the school file in explanation for taking the child off roll.
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## **DELETIONS AFTER CONTINUOUS ABSENCE OF NOT LESS THAN 20 SCHOOL DAYS**

When taking children off roll due to twenty days absence and in order to comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and the Education Act 1996, guidance states that schools **must** ensure that the following applies:

That the pupil has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and

- (i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised
- (ii) the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and
- (iii) both the school **and** the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is.

If any parts of this are not complied with, the pupil cannot be taken off roll and this may result in the school being vulnerable to legal action and having to put the pupil back on roll.

In the case of a pupil where the parent has requested a leave of absence of over twenty school days it is important that the school notifies the parent in writing that failure to return within the twenty days could result in the pupil being taken off roll. Once the absence begins, and within the twenty days, even if the school believe that the family are not at home, they must endeavour to make enquiries with the family and are advised to write to the home address stating that if the pupil does not return by a specified date, they will be taken off roll. At the same time, a referral should be made to the Inclusion Officer, as representative of the LA, for enquiries to be made.

If the pupil does not return by the specified date and enquiries have been made, the pupil can be taken off roll and the parents should be notified. It is not enough just to warn parents that the pupil may be taken off roll, enquiries must be made by school and the LA.

It is recommended that an entry is made in the School Attendance Policy to state that pupils may be at risk of losing a school place in cases of unauthorised absence.

For further information regarding when children can be taken off school's roll please contact your IO or the SW Inclusion Service on 01483 518187.

### **Non-starters**

In DfE Statutory Guidance and Departmental Advice on School Attendance (August 2013) it advises that if a school is expecting a child to arrive at the beginning of term, the child MUST be put on the Admissions and Attendance register.

In the event of the child not arriving, the child must be marked as absent and enquiries made with Admissions. If Admissions confirm that the child has started at another school, the child can be taken off roll. However, if there is no record of the child starting anywhere else, school must refer to the Inclusion Service for a visit to be made and appropriate action can be taken to enforce attendance or establish what provision is being made.