

Marton Manor Primary School

Policy for attendance and punctuality

1 Introduction

This policy was reviewed in Summer 2010 with staff at Marton Manor School. It was approved by Governors in Summer 2013 and was last reviewed in Spring 2016. It will be reviewed in Spring 2019 or earlier if necessary.

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are 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 was authorised or unauthorised. It will also monitor any lateness patterns.

2 Definitions

2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. We ask that this should be done as early as possible on the first day of absence for safeguarding purposes.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and /or a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. If this reaches an Attendance Conference then parents may be asked to produce medical evidence of sickness absence such as an appointment card or Dr's letter, a prescription or a hospital appointment card.

Lateness

Any arrival after the start of morning school at 8.50 a.m. is classed as lateness. Any child arriving late should be recorded as a Late in the register. Any patterns of lateness in any half term must be notified with the secretary and Head Teacher.

3 If a child is absent

- 3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office staff. Parents are asked to ring school by 10 a.m. with a reason for the child's non-attendance. If this does not happen the office staff will ring to contact a parent or guardian.
- 3.2 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.
- 3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact as soon as possible with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

4 Requests for leave of absence

- 4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, there are exceptional circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a close family member's wedding or funeral. We expect parents and carers to contact the school at least a few days in advance, and complete a holiday form. This request may be granted provided their attendance meets LA acceptable percentages for attendance (See Leave of absence request form)..
- 4.2 Parents and carers can no longer request that their children take a holiday from school. We naturally prefer parents and carers to take their family holiday in the normal school holiday periods, but if this is not possible, the school may grant the leave of absence in exceptional circumstances e.g. if the parent is a member of the armed forces and has limited leave. Evidence of the leave rota may be requested or a senior officer's letter to explain why the leave cannot be taken during school holidays. Pupils taking SATs tests and assessments will not be granted leave of absence during May because of preparation and testing arrangements.

5 Long-term absence

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6 Repeated unauthorised absences

- 6.1 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 and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the EWO support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation. Social Care may also have a role to play.
- 6.2 The governors, supported by the EWO and the LA, reserve the right to hold an attendance conference. They may then consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. This may result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice and a fine or an appearance in Court.

Repeated lateness

Where more than 5 late marks are showing in any half term period then a lateness letter needs to be sent home and parents or guardians will be asked to ensure an improvement occurs. This will be monitored by the class teacher and Administrator. If no improvement is seen this will be followed up by the Attendance Officer and parents may be visited at home to find the underlying causes of the lateness. Offers of practical help may be given if there are mitigating circumstances but ultimately it is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure that children arrive promptly for school.

7 Rewards for good attendance

- 7.1 All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, if possible awarded at one of the last assemblies of

the term. There are special gold certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

8 Attendance targets

- 8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LA as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the head teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file .
- 9.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the Head Teacher's governors' report.
- 9.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the head teacher, who will contact the parents or guardians through the Attendance Officer.