

MOORHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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| Latest Update | September 2022 |
| Review Date | September 2023 |



**Shaw
Education
Trust**

Our policy has been reviewed following the publication of the following documents from the Department for Education. Moorhill Primary School follows government guidance and Staffordshire local authority policy.

1. School Attendance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1076127/School_attendance_guidance_May-2022_.pdf

2. Improving School Attendance: Support for Schools and Local Authorities

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/framework-for-securing-full-attendance-actions-for-schools-and-local-authorities>

3. Working Together to Improve School Attendance

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

5. Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073619/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf

Principles

The governors and staff of Moorhill Primary school seek to ensure that all pupils receives a high quality, full-time education to ensure every pupil achieves his/her full potential. We recognise that this can only be achieved by promoting excellent attendance. Only by attending school regularly and punctually, can pupils make the very best of the opportunities available to them. Good attendance is essential for high levels of attainment and progress, and for a positive impact on pupil well-being. We consider good attendance to be at least 96%.

The school will strive to create and maintain an environment in which pupils, and all members of the school community, feel safe, secure and cared for, and in which they are highly motivated to engage positively in school life.

Moorhill has a designated team to champion high levels of attendance: Ceri Snowden, Wendy Andrews and Alison Cox. Through this team, the school will communicate honestly and openly with staff, pupils and families to clearly communicate the expectations of school life and performance, and to closely monitor attendance attendance and punctuality.

The school will develop its system of incentives and rewards to acknowledge the efforts that pupils make to improve their attendance. The school will also challenge any behaviours which do not give priority to attendance and punctuality – this is because we know that high levels of attendance improve learning outcomes, impact on future outcomes, and impact positively on pupil well-being.

Being part of the school community means being here, not missing out on learning or on social interaction with peers, building strong and caring relationships and effectively developing our core values of:

- ✓ Self-belief
- ✓ Teamwork
- ✓ Respect
- ✓ Ambition and Aspiration
- ✓ Effort

Our aims for 2022-2023 are:

1: Raise the school's overall attendance percentage and reduce the percentage of persistent absences

The school's target for 2022-2023 attendance is to reach at least 96%.

The steps the school will take to ensure this are:

- All staff will promote excellent school attendance, praising pupils for punctuality and good attendance and encouraging each class to reach the school target on a weekly basis.
- All staff will provide a motivating environment in which pupils are ready to learn, are valued and look forward to coming into school each day. The school will ensure high quality teaching and learning through a curriculum that meets the needs of all learners.
- The school will liaise closely with other agencies working with the pupil, so there is clear communication and understanding with regards the pupil's attendance
- The school will carry out home visits if a child is absent and parent has not contacted the school and is not contactable, or if leaders have a concern regarding the absence.
- Attendance will be monitored regularly. Where there is first a concern around individual attendance, the attendance team will contact parents/carers in the first instance, to listen to the parent and pupil and understand what the barriers are, in order to help remove them. If there is not a reasonable improvement, parents/carers will be asked into school to attend an attendance clinic, to review attendance alongside their child's progress and attainment. The attendance team will monitor the child's attendance daily, reporting back to the head teacher. If there is no significant improvement in attendance, this will be referred to the Education Welfare Service by the attendance team. Pupils with attendance levels below 90% are be considered to be persistently absent from school and will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. This is because repeated absence and lateness have a long-term negative impact on progress, achievement and well-being.
- If attendance falls below 90%, the school will not authorise any further absence unless medical evidence is received, for example:

- A copy of the dated prescription
- Evidence of a medical appointment

If evidence is not received, the absences will be recorded as unauthorised. If attendance does not improve, the Education Welfare Officer may become involved; this may result in a Penalty Notice being issued.

- The school will take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and their pastoral, social and cultural needs and the ways in which this might contribute to absence.

2. Make attendance high priority across all members of our school community, ensuring every person understands their role in relation to attendance

The Head teacher will report attendance figures to the Academy Council (Governing Body) termly.

Attendance is regularly a feature in our school newsletter. The Head teacher will write to parents termly to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality and parents/parents will receive a half termly update regarding their child's attendance.

Staff discuss attendance with pupils at least weekly, as part of the class forum, and work together with the class to overcome any barriers that may be affecting attendance. In addition, attendance features in assemblies each week.

The school will no longer authorise any holidays taken in term time and should any holidays be taken, they will be registered as unauthorised. Those of five days or longer will be passed to the Education Welfare Officer for statutory fining (currently £60 per parent with parental responsibility, per child). The school does not benefit financially from statutory fining, which is a government requirement in order to support good attendance and therefore improve learning outcomes for children.

For information regarding the responsibilities of parents and the school, please follow this link: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073619/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf

Class rewards will be given weekly, with our attendance bear stopping for a week in the class on each site with the highest attendance.

Individual certificates acknowledging attendance of 96% or over are presented to children each half term. A child achieving 96% attendance in every half term would receive six certificates over the year, ranging from Bronze through to Platinum. A child not achieving 96% in one half term would not receive a certificate – but they can still receive a certificate in the following half term, if attendance reaches 96%.

We will acknowledge significant improvement in behaviour for individual pupils.

3. Deploy attendance, pastoral and SEND staff who are skilled in supporting pupils and their families, to identify and overcome barriers to attendance.

All members of the school community have important roles to play regarding good school attendance. This includes pupils, parents, carers, teaching and support staff, senior leaders and governors. This policy will clarify the role and expectations of each of these community members.

‘Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools’ efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners’
(Working Together to Improve School Attendance)

The school will draw on the expertise of staff, including our attendance team, ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants), SENCO, and mental health leads, to best support any pupils for whom attendance is a concern. The impact of any interventions will be monitored and, where it has not led to improvement, the reasons for this will be reviewed.

4. Develop a systematic approach to monitoring attendance and punctuality

The school will continue to keep accurate attendance registers, completed through an electronic reporting system, by school staff twice a day. These will be monitored daily by office staff, who will contact by phone any families who have not already made us aware of an absence – they will inform the Attendance Lead daily. Each week the Attendance Lead will report attendance data (whole school, class and group data, plus any individual data that is a concern) to the Head teacher.

Attendance Leads (Wendy Andrews and Alison Cox) will monitor and analyse attendance data weekly, to allow early intervention to address issues. This includes raising concerns with other agencies like children’s social care and early help services which are working with families. They will also provide regular reports to staff regarding cohort and individual attendance, to enable them to track the attendance of pupils in their class and to implement attendance procedures.

The Head teacher will report attendance figures to the Academy Council each term.

Lateness

We expect children to be in school on time every day. Registration for all Reception is at 8.45am and at 8.50am for all other year groups. This is the time all children must be in class. Children entering via the school office after these times are registered as late (an ‘L’ mark on the register) and a reason must be given for the lateness.

The ‘L’ code is classed as a present mark, but displays that the child is late for school.

Any child arriving after 9.15am, but before the end of the morning session, will be recorded as ‘U’ in the register. This indicates that he/she will be recorded as absence for the morning session.

The 'U' code is classed as an unauthorised absence but displays that the child was physically in school for part of the session.

The school office staff are responsible for organising the registration of any pupils late on each key stage site.

It is essential that pupils arrive in school on time. Lateness not only has a negative impact on learning, it can make pupils very unsettled as they are not involved in daily routines – this can also affect their organisation skills and their well-being.

Arriving in school late each day every day would equate to approximately seven missed school days over the year. Arriving thirty minutes later would equate to approximately twenty-one missed days in school. Persistent late arrival at school would result, in the first instance, with the involvement of our Inclusion Manager. This would be in the form of a home visit, phone conversation, meeting or letter depending on the number of late arrivals. The Inclusion Manager may also work with parents and other agencies, to put in place an Early Help Assessment (EHA) to support improved punctuality. A Persistent Absence (PA) plan may also be put in place. In line with the local authority Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices for absence/lateness to school and will notify the local authority of children exceeding twelve late marks in a twelve-week period. This can lead to a Penalty Notice fine.

The number of sessions in which a pupil arrives late for school will be recorded on his or her termly report.

Attendance and Illness

If a child is not well enough to be in school, parents or carers must contact the school before 9am on the first day of absence. Office staff will need to know the reason for absence.

If a child is absent and we have not received a phone call by the end of registration, a member of the office staff will phone parents/carers to find out the reason for absence. If no contact is made, the school will send a text message asking parents/carers to contact the school. If the school does not receive a response, a home visit may be carried out.

Reporting Absence

Parents/carers must contact the school by phone, letter or in person to report their child's absence. This must be by 9am on the first day of absence.

For an appointment that cannot be made before or after the school day, an appointment card should be brought to the school office.

For an absence due to an exceptional circumstance, the appropriate form should be collected and completed in advance (collected from and returned to the school office).

It is requested that notifications for absence are not sent via Class DOJO.

Authorised Absence

The Head teacher has responsibility for authorising absences and will do so once a valid reason for the absence has been given.

Unauthorised Absence

When a child is absent without a valid reason, or a leave of absence is not authorised, an unauthorised absence will be given. If a child's attendance falls below 90% at any point in the school year, no further absences will be authorised without medical evidence. Twelve instances of unauthorised absence in a twelve-week period will be sent to the Local Authority and may result in a fine.

Procedure for taking a child out of school during the school day

Parents/carers report to the school office and wait while the child is collected from class by the office staff. Any absence is recorded by office staff, including the reason, time and time the child is expected to return to school.

Medical Appointments

Routine medical and dental appointments should be made out of school hours wherever possible. Where it is not possible for the appointment to be before or after school, children are expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

Special Occasions

A request to attend a special occasion during school time, for example a family wedding, must be made in advance. The Head teacher will consider the request and decide whether to authorise the absence. The decision will be communicated to parents/carers.

Bereavement

The school is sensitive for absence requests for a child's attendance at a funeral or other related events and the Head teacher will offer the family advice regarding attendance in relation to this.

Days of Religious Occurrence

Attendance at a religious observance held by a religious body will be granted authorised absence for a maximum of two days' absence during the academic year. The Head teacher should be notified in advance of the event.

Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances

The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. A family holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance and will not be authorised. It is expected that holidays are taken only within the school holiday periods, outside term time. Any request for leave of absence must be made in writing to the Headteacher, using the 'Request for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances' form which is available from the school office. This will be considered in line with government and local authority guidance.

Any unauthorised absences will be recorded on the child's attendance record and may result in the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer, who will investigate why a child has been absent on the dates given. This investigation could result in parents/carers receiving a penalty notice.

Where leave of absence has been requested for an unauthorised reason, such as a holiday, and the pupil's attendance falls below 95%, the school will not authorise any further absence for illness without medical evidence confirming the illness. For example, this might include:

Appendix 1

Arrival times from 06.09.2022

| Year Group | Start and End of Day (start of day shows the time the pupil should be in the classroom for registration) | Location (entrance at start and end of day) |
|------------|--|--|
| Reception | 8.55 – 3.15 (Children come in from 8.45am – registration at 8.55am). | Middle (RKE) or end (RAS/MF) pedestrian gate and down to the Reception outdoor area. |
| Year 1 | 8.55 – 3.20 (Children come in from 8.45am – registration at 8.55am). | Pedestrian gate leading to the playground. |
| Year 2 | 8.55 – 3.20 (Children come in from 8.45am – registration at 8.55am). | Pedestrian gate leading to the playground. |
| Year 3 | 8.55-3.25 | Pedestrian gate. At end of day, collect from the large playground, on the side by the pre-school fence and shed. |
| Year 4 | 8.55-3.25 | Pedestrian gate. At end of day, collect from the small playground. |
| Year 5 | 8.55-3.30 | Pedestrian gate. At end of day, collect from the large playground on the side by the climbing wall and field. |
| Year 6 | 8.55-3.30 | Pedestrian gate. At end of day, wait on the playground under the canopy. |

Appendix 2

Attendance Monitoring

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| SEPTEMBER 2023 | | |
| DAILY | Absences – phone calls Any attendance below 92% | |
| WEEKLY | Class and year group attendance Progress of persistence absence | |

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| HALF TERM | Group attendance | |
| LY | Attendance dashboard report for Academy Council | |
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