



Attendance Policy

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INTRODUCTION

This school is **committed** to providing a full and efficient educational **experience for all pupils**. It is also committed to meeting the DfE (Department for Education) and Plymouth targets for raising levels of school attendance. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, **excellent attendance is crucial**. We organise and do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems, which impede full attendance, will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is **vital all children are at school, on time, every day** the school is open. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

To achieve these aims the school has:

- Attendance targets
- A policy of celebrating good attendance through reporting back to parents throughout the year
- A clear policy and procedure on authorising leave, including holiday absences
- A thorough practice for recording and reviewing punctuality and lateness
- A clear course of action for first-day contact between parent and school, whenever a child is absent
- A comprehensive and detailed procedure for taking formal action where a child's attendance is unsatisfactory.

This policy reflects the DfE's guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance'.

EXPECT

We hold high expectations for attendance for all of our pupils and aim to build a positive culture where attendance is prioritised by all and a strong culture whereby pupils and families attend every day and on time. Below we set out our expectations for positive attendance.

Start and finish time of registration

Morning Session

The school day starts at **8.45am**. Any child arriving after 8.55am is late as the morning registration closes at this time. The school bell will ring at 8.55am. At this time, doors will close and pupils will need to enter school through the reception area where they will be signed in. Our sign in electronic system 'time stamps' each sign in. The time recorded by the electronic sign in app is used to determine how many minutes late a pupil is.

Children should be in class by 8.55am when registers close. Any child arriving after this time is marked late. If a child arrives after 9.15am then they are deemed to be absent for the morning session.

Afternoon session

Lessons commence as follows:

Foundation: 12.30pm

Year 1: 12.45pm

Year 2: 1.10pm

Year 3 & 4: 1.30pm

Year 5 & 6: 1.15pm

Authorised/Unauthorised absences

All absences must be explained by a parent/carer. The school will then decide whether or not it will authorise the absence.

Acceptable reasons to authorise absences:	Absences that will not be authorised:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illness• Medical appointments• School arranged transport that hasn't turned up on time• Unavoidable cause (this means an unusual/extraordinary event that couldn't be avoided)• A specified, limited period for an immediate family member's bereavement, crisis or serious illness• A funeral of an immediate family member• Religious observance (you'll need authorisation from the school at least four weeks before the event)• A specified, limited period for children of service personnel about to go on deployment (you'll need to provide a letter from the Commanding Officer as evidence)• One day for a wedding of an immediate family member (you'll need to provide the invitation as evidence)• One day for an immediate family members graduation ceremony/passing out parade (you'll need to provide the invitation as evidence)• A one-off sporting events/performing arts competition if your child is participating and is at county standard or above (you'll need to provide a letter from the performing arts/sports regional governing body as evidence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Birthdays, if ill on a birthday medical evidence will be required• Shopping• Caring for other family members• Visiting relatives• Mild colds or illnesses.• To interpret for family members• Having no school uniform/shoes• Bullying• Friendship problems• Head lice• Learning difficulties• Family holiday• Weddings abroad (even if it's immediate family)• Family anniversaries• Death of a pet• Travel problems• Attending immigration interviews with parents or guardian• Moving to a new house• School refusal• Lateness after the school's registration period

These are not exhaustive lists.

Reporting absence

Reporting by parents/carers

On the 1st day of absence, parents/carers should call the school or use the dedicated absence line to report their child's absence **by 9.15am** giving a full reason for your child's absence (including symptoms), their name and class.
In some cases we will call straight away if your child is not in school.



On the 3rd day of absence, parents/carers should reconfirm their child's absence from school by calling the school or using the dedicated absence line **by 9.15am** giving an update on symptoms for our records

ALL ABSENCES MUST BE REPORTED TO SCHOOL.

What parents/carers can expect from school

9.30am – text sent to parents/carers of children who are not in school and no reason has been reported.



10.30am onwards – school will call parents/carers of those children who we do not have a reason for their absence, following the text message.



If we haven't heard from parents/carers and the child remains off school we will make calls to all contacts we have on our system.



If your child has not returned the next day and we still haven't heard from you we will complete a **house call**.

If we do not get an answer from the house call, we will invite parents/carers in to attend an attendance meeting.

A referral to MASH (Plymouth Social Care Gateway) may be made if the school has concerns about the welfare of the pupil following the house call.

If your child returns to school the next day, we will send a letter home requesting parents/carers to provide a reason for their absence.

If a child has 8 unauthorised absences within a 6 month period, the school will make a referral to Education Welfare within the Local Authority.

If a child has 2 lates (before or after the register has closed) within a week, parent/carers will receive a text at the end of the week alerting them to this and requesting immediate improvement.

If a child is absent from school for 3 days in a row, medical evidence will be requested in order to authorise the absence.

Requesting the absence

All requests for a child to be absent from school during term time must be made in writing at least a **half term in advance** (unless in exceptional circumstances that prevent this notice) of the proposed absence by completing the absence request form obtainable from the school office.

The Headteacher or person with delegated responsibility will decide whether or not to authorise the absence, on a case by case basis, and will only do so where there are exceptional circumstances. Where a decision is made not to authorise a request for leave of absence, the school will write to the parent(s)/carer(s), notifying them of that decision. If the absence is unauthorised and still taken, the school may request the Local Authority to consider issuing a Penalty Notice (PN) to the parent(s)/carer(s) for the unauthorised absence.

MONITOR

Leaders and administrative team, in order to identify pupils whose attendance is causing a concern, persistent absentees and those pupils at risk of becoming persistent absentees, monitor attendance on a 2-weekly basis. (Persistent absentees are pupils who have missed 19 days which equates to 38 sessions during the course of the academic year, which equates to an attendance percentage of 90% or below).

Absences may be unauthorised by the school where no reason has been provided by the parent/carers for an absence or if the school feels the reason for the absence is untrue. The Parent Support Advisor may telephone parents/carers for clarification of the absence.

Where a pupil's attendance is causing concern, the following actions will be taken:

Attendance letter 1 (Green Warning) will be sent advising the parent that their child's attendance has dropped below 96%.

Attendance letter 2 (Amber Warning) will be sent advising the parent that their child's attendance has dropped below 94%. Parents/carers are offered to attend a meeting with the class teacher/Headteacher/Parent Support Advisor, as considered appropriate by the school, to discuss their child's attendance.

Attendance letter 3 (Red Warning) will be sent advising the parent that their child's attendance has dropped below 92%. Parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting with the Headteacher/Parent Support Advisor to discuss their child's attendance.

Persistently Absent letter will be sent where a pupil's attendance is below 90%. All persistently absent pupils will be monitored for improvement.

Parents/Carers will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher/Parent Support Advisor if no improvement is seen.

Late Letter will be sent if there are 3 or more lates (before and after the register closes) over a 3 week period. Lates will be reviewed fortnightly and a Red Attendance letter will be sent to parents/carers if no improvement is seen.

Illness

We recognise that pupils become ill from time to time. Some illnesses do not require time off school (like a cold, for example), whereas some do (diarrhoea, sickness). We can provide parents/carers with advice and support if you are unsure as to whether your child should be having time off school.

Medical evidence will be requested where a child has been absent for 3 consecutive days or more due to illness OR where a child's attendance is below 95% and/or the child is regularly away from school due to illness. Failure to provide evidence when requested may result in the absences being recorded as unauthorised. Medical evidence can be in the form of a copy of a prescription, medication, an appointment card/text or E-Consult notification showing name of child and date they visited. If a child is diagnosed with a medical condition, evidence should be provided. Referral to School Nurse/Family Support may be made to offer advice and support to the family.

Medical/dental appointments

All routine (non-emergency) appointments should be made, whenever possible, **outside of school hours**. Should a child need to have an appointment during school hours, evidence of this appointment will need to be provided. Failure to provide evidence may result in the school unauthorising the absence. All non-emergency appointments will not be authorised. Appointments made on behalf of the pupil patient will be authorised with appropriate appointment letter/confirmation.

Lateness

There are examples of the negative results caused by pupils who constantly arrive late. These are:

- The loss of education suffered by the child which over a year can add up to a significant proportion of their time at school.
- The disruption to other children in their class as the teacher's attention is taken from the task at hand.
- Disruption to their social and emotional development due to not being in school at the key meet and greet times.
- Experiencing a lack of routine or lack of understanding about school routines
- Missing out on the key settling time of the day and interactions with their peers and adults
- Always missing the same lessons or same parts of lessons.

The strategies that the school will use to tackle lateness will include:

- Pupils who arrive 10 minutes after registration are considered 'Late' (L) and will be required to enter the school via reception to sign in and record the reason for their late arrival.
- Children who arrive after 9:15am are considered as 'Late after registers close' (U - unauthorised absence).

- Registration staff will record the appropriate late mark in the registers, and these will be entered into the computerised attendance programme.
- All children's attendance records will be checked fortnightly for 'lates before registers close (L)' and 'lates after registers close (U)'. Where these lates cumulate to 3 or more in a half term the school will send a letter to the parents/carers of the pupil in question to discuss any support needs and ways of accessing support.
- Send a text message to parents/carers each Friday if your child has had 2 or more lates in a week.

** 10 or more 'late after registers close' (U) codes could result in the school making a referral to the Local Authority for legal action to be taken **

Celebrating attendance

We want to celebrate positive attendance and attendance habits amongst our pupils and their families. As such, we will be celebrating positive attendance in the following ways:

Group:

- Awarding a certificate and trophy to the class in Foundation/Key Stage One and Key Stage Two with the highest attendance. This is presented during Celebration Assembly.
- At the end of each term, the class in Foundation/Key Stage One and Key Stage Two with the highest overall attendance will be invited to a celebratory breakfast with the Headteacher.
- At the end of the year, the class in Foundation/Key Stage One and Key Stage Two with the highest attendance will be gifted a celebratory afternoon of their choosing.

Individual:

- 3 times a year, pupils with attendance 98% or above will be invited to a celebratory lunch with the Headteacher and/or Deputy.
- At the end of the year, pupils with attendance of 98% or above will be invited to a trip out of school and will be entered into a grand prize draw.

Community:

- Where attendance is improving, the school will send home congratulatory letters.
- Notes will be sent home where it is evident that an effort is being made to change attendance habits.
- The school will actively acknowledge and celebrate the efforts being made by families to ensure their child is in school on time every day.
- An attendance celebratory display outside of the school building.

Punctuality:

- Each week, in Celebration Assembly, we will acknowledge and award the 'Punctuality Penguin' and 'On Time Octopus' to those classes who have the fewest late marks in Foundation/Key Stage One and Key Stage Two.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

We will always work with parents/carers to support positive attendance habits. When we identify a pattern of poor attendance or where parents/carers have their own concerns we have a whole team of people able and ready to support.

Parents/carers will be contacted by, or can make contact with, the following members of the team to discuss attendance and ways we can move forward positively together.

- Parent Support Advisor
- Attendance Officer and Administration team
- SENDCo
- Headteacher
- Class teacher
- Deputy Headteacher
- Support staff
- Education Welfare Officers within the Local Authority

We will work with you to identify the current barriers to attendance and agree how we can work together to move forward and see improvements.

Each parent will receive a copy of their child's attendance percentages termly and at the end of the year. The school attendance policy and procedures will be published on the school website. Any parent can request their own child's attendance figures at any time. The school will be happy to provide that information in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Parents will receive a termly attendance ladder letter stating their child's current attendance and where their child's current attendance sits on the ladder.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

We recognise that poor attendance can be the result of a number of different issues – these are the barriers to your child being in school on time every day. The school will work closely with families to identify the barriers that they face and will offer or signpost further support to help in removing these barriers. **The law is clear that every child of compulsory school age is entitled to efficient, full-time education suitable to their age. In addition, the law is clear that parents/carers who decide to enrol their child in a registered school have a legal duty to ensure their child attends regularly.** Therefore, we will work with families in a variety of ways to support them in establishing and maintaining improving positive attendance. This might include (however, support will always be personalised to the individual family):

- Signposting to other agencies or organisations
- Completing a voluntary Early Help assessment to access the support needed and set clear targets for the family
- Working together to set attendance targets as part of an Attendance Improvement Plan
- Consideration of other education providers who could provide outreach support
- Carrying out further assessments of need for the pupil
- Formal meetings with the Headteacher to review attendance and set manageable targets

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support has not been effective in improving attendance, the school will work with the Local Authority to decide on the best next steps for the family. This might include:

- Referrals to the Education Welfare Team at the Local Authority
- Introducing a parenting contract
- Introducing an education supervision order
- Issuing a fixed penalty notice
- Involvement of social care (where there are also safeguarding concerns)
- Moving towards prosecution, where all other avenues of support have failed to improve attendance

ENFORCE

If you fail to make sure your child attends school regularly (even if they're missing school without your knowledge), you may be issued with a penalty notice (a fine for children who miss school without authorisation) or subject to a criminal prosecution.

A penalty notice of £60 may be issued as an alternative to prosecution. This rises to £120 if you don't pay within 21 days. Failure to pay within 28 days will normally lead to prosecution.

We can issue a penalty notice if:

- your child has eight or more unauthorised absences from school over a six-month period (eight absences are equal to four school days as there are two sessions in a school day)
- your child has been late to school after registration has closed eight or more times over a six-month period
- your child is found during a truancy sweep and the absence hasn't been authorised by the school, and there are already eight previous unauthorised absences
- you repeatedly fail to provide the school or our Inclusion, Attendance and Welfare Service reasons for your child's absences (this includes ignoring our attempts to contact you)
- your child is found in a public place during the first five days of a fixed term suspension or permanent exclusion