



Marlborough Primary School
Achievement for All

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Adopted by GB: 29.1.14
Reviewed December 2016

MARLBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY On time and every day

At Marlborough Primary School in order for children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly and are on time unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure that their children attend school every day.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and poor pupil attendance and punctuality is seen as a barrier to learning and progress. There is a clear link between poor attendance and achievement at school and therefore the school seeks to ensure that the importance of being at school on time and every day is understood by the whole school community. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of others in the same class. The school aims for attendance to be as close to the national average as possible and ideally exceed it.

Expectations

Children should only be absent from school if the reason is unavoidable. Allowing a child to be absent without good reason **is against the law**. Every half day absence has to be classified by the school (not the parents) as either authorised or unauthorised absence. Information about the reason of each absence is always required **in writing or verbally**.

Children are expected to attend school each and every day if they are well. They should arrive at school before 9am and to be collected at 3.30pm (3.25pm in the nursery class).

If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact the school, on the first day, in person, by phone or by email. If you have to leave a message you must state the nature of your child's illness. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which can only be in school time, provided an appointment card/letter is received. If a child has more than 5 days absence from school due to illness we may ask for medical evidence, such as a doctors note/letter, appointment card, or a copy of a prescription/medicine label.

Authorised absences are defined as mornings or afternoons away from school for good reason (as deemed by the school.)

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave or good reason has been given. Continued unauthorised absence could lead to the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice or taking legal action.

Examples of unauthorised absence includes:-

- Keeping children off school for trivial reasons;
- Truancy;
- Absences which have never been properly explained;

- Children who arrive at school too late to get a present mark. (See lateness)

Providing a written note or letter may not be sufficient if the school believes that the reason given for the absence is not sufficient. Children should never be kept off school for reasons such as going shopping, a birthday, a treat or due to sibling illness.

Lateness

Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for a session. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration. **Registration is at 9.am. Children arriving after 9.am will be marked late for registration. Parents must sign them in at the school office and provide a good reason for lateness.** If a child arrives more than 30 minutes late (9.30am) after the register is closed, without good reason, they are considered to have arrived after the close of registration and will be marked 'U' in the register. This is regarded as unauthorised absence.

Please note that the school day counts as two sessions, morning and afternoon. There are a minimum of 380 sessions during the academic year.

Collection

Parents/carers are expected to collect your children promptly at 3:30pm or 3:25pm for Nursery and Reception. If parents/carers are unavoidably delayed, they are asked to ring the school by 3:20pm to ensure this message is passed onto the class teacher. If someone other than the child's parents is collecting a child parents/carers must ensure they have filled out a 'Safety Collection Form' in advance which is available from the School Office. Young children in particular can become very distressed if they are not collected promptly. However, in an emergency, if parent/carers need children to be collected by someone other than themselves then they need to call the school giving details of the person collecting their child.

If parents/carers are late please they collect their child from the school office where they will be asked to sign the late book before taking their child. If late collection becomes a regular occurrence parents/carers will be asked to meet with the Headteacher. The school is **not** responsible for looking after children after 3.30pm and is within its rights to phone social services and report uncollected children. The school accepts that occasionally late collection may be unavoidable and parents/carers are asked to phone the school if this is likely to be the case.

Roles

Each **parent/carer** is legally responsible for sending their child to school each day and can be prosecuted for not doing so.

Teachers discuss attendance with their class and hand out stickers for 100% attendance and/or punctuality each week. Teachers also encourage attendance at school by ensuring the importance of being in school every day is communicated to their class and by ensuring that learning is exciting and children want to come to school. At each termly parent/teacher consultation meeting **teachers** draw attention to the child's percentage of absence.

The **Attendance Officer** monitors all attendance and liaises with parents and the **Headteacher** where the school has any concerns over a child's attendance and/or punctuality. Together they try to identify the barriers to good attendance and create a plan with parents/carers in order to then support families where there are attendance concerns. Targets are set and the plans reviewed after 4 weeks.

The Early Help Team from the local authority visit the school regularly to discuss attendance concerns and also to look at the register with the Attendance Officer. The school can make

referrals to the **Early Help Team** who may then become involved with families where there are concerns about persistent absence or difficulties with getting children to school.

Leave of Absence

The Government, the Local Authority and Marlborough Primary School actively discourage parents taking pupils out of school during term time for holidays. No holiday leave will be authorised by the Head teacher. Requests will only be granted in exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis. Application forms for requests of leave are available from the school office. A Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 may be issued for unauthorised leave, rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days.

Levels of intervention

- Every month teachers are informed of the attendance percentages for each pupil in their class for that month and previous months. Any concerns are picked up by the Attendance Officer and Headteacher and followed up with meetings with parents where a plan is drawn up to improve attendance over a 4 – 6 week period and then reviewed with the parent. Attendance below 90% is the point at which the school intervenes.
- Every month the Attendance Officer informs parents by letter of any unauthorised absences.
- Every week the Attendance Office informs parents by letter of any lateness and minutes of learning missed (if late more than once).
- Every term the Attendance Officer writes to parents to inform them of their child's attendance level for the previous term on coloured paper which follows a traffic light system.
- The school reports to the ACE team where penalty notices or warning need to be issued to parents for unauthorised absences

Rewards

- Each week children with 100% attendance and/punctuality for the previous week are given stickers.
- Every Monday the Headteacher awards a cup to the class with the best attendance and punctuality for the previous week
- Every month teachers hand out certificates for 100% attendance for the month
- At the end of term children receive a certificate if they have had 100% attendance
- If a child has had 100% attendance for 2 terms they receive a certificate and a badge
- At the end of the school year any child with 100% attendance receives a certificate and a badge for attendance

Current guidance

OFSTED, who inspect schools, make a judgment by looking at all the data the school holds on attendance, the pattern of absence and what the school has done to improve attendance.

96% is the national average attendance and below 94% is seen as low attendance and could result in a judgement of 'requires improvement' in this area.

The school follows the advice and guidance given by the Local authority regarding attendance.

Use of data

The school makes use of all sorts of data and when tracking pupil progress, attendance is looked at to see if it is a contributory factor in any under performance and to look for any patterns.

The school is able to track individual attendance year on year and tracks all pupil absences.

The school sets targets for attendance and pupil progress each year which are reviewed on a termly basis and reported to the Governors of the school once a term.

Safeguarding of children

Attendance at school is seen as a child safeguarding and welfare issue. The school requires all parents to inform the school of any absence and give good reasons for it.. Every child has an entitlement to full time education and the school's role is to ensure that children succeed when at school.

This policy was reviewed in December 2016