



Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Responsibility: SLT

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MUNDELLA PRIMARY PRINCIPLES FOR ATTENDANCE

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LEARNING MENTOR/DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING DEPUTY: [Miss Lisa Hewitt](#)

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Policy Statement

Good attendance and punctuality are vital if pupils are to achieve their maximum potential. Mundella Primary School is committed to working with parent/carers and pupils to ensure that each pupil benefits from the academic, personal and social opportunities available to them during their years with us.

Aims of the Policy

- Set out clear procedures encouraging pupils to achieve their maximum potential by maintaining good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring parent/carers and pupils are informed about the procedures for attendance and encouraging them to take an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring all teaching, non-teaching staff and governors understand the procedures
- To recognise and reward pupils who achieve attendance and punctuality targets throughout the academic year.

The Law

- All pupils of compulsory school age receive a suitable full time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise
- The Local Authority must provide school places to parents who wish their children to be educated at school
- The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session
- The school must report to the Local Authority pupils who fail to attend regularly or are absent for more than ten days without explanation
- The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities

Failure by parents to ensure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law.

Sheffield's attendance strategy – Key themes and priorities:

- Continue to support schools' own management of attendance
- Early Intervention and Prevention
- Support for Looked After Children
- Local Authority Targeted Support
- Full and Effective use of Legal Powers

Partnerships

What the school expects of our pupils:

- Attend regularly, on time and ready to learn
- Be prepared for the day with appropriate equipment e.g. P.E. kit
- Report to the office should they arrive after registration time
- Tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may prevent them from attending school

What the school expects of parent/carers:

- Ensure their child attends regularly, on time and prepared for the day
- Notify school on the first and third day of absence
- Only request leave in term time in exceptional circumstances
- Accept the obligations contained in the Home/School Agreement
- Make dental, medical, non-urgent appointments out of school hours if possible
- Speak to the relevant staff if there is any known reason which may prevent their child from attending school

Parent/carers are encouraged to make contact with school to discuss any issues impacting on their child's engagement/enjoyment at school or their attendance/punctuality.

What parent/carers can expect from school:

- To provide a broad and balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance at school
- Senior Management as Attendance Lead.
- A member of the Governing Body to take responsibility for attendance and have a practice of reporting to governors on attendance matters
- Attendance information to be sent to parents/carers e.g. by newsletter or end of year report.
- Produce and annually review a whole school attendance policy, which sets out how attendance is managed and what monitoring systems are in place. This should be ratified and monitored by the governing body.
- Set realistic but challenging annual attendance targets.
- Have efficient and effective registration systems which encourage attendance, punctuality and safeguards children.
- Adhere to legal requirements regarding attendance and registrations
- When attendance is of serious concern, follow the procedures stated in this policy
- Have an expectation that full time, punctual attendance will be the norm and all absences will be followed up
- Monitor attendance daily through checking registers and parental notes
- First day contact with parent/carers when a pupil is absent without explanation
- Have an emphasis on the importance of regular school attendance in the Home/School agreement
- Be observant and alert to changes in patterns of attendance by individual pupils as well as particular groups.
- Reward children with excellent attendance
- Ensure any concerns raised by parent/carers will be responded to quickly and sensitively by the school.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

- Maintain an overview of attendance through reports provided by the Head teacher
- Have a named governor for Attendance
- Attend School Attendance meetings as necessary

Head teacher

- Has overall responsibility for attendance within the school
- Provides advice and support to school staff regarding attendance and punctuality issues
- Liaises with the other officers of the Local Authority to implement attendance strategies

- Works with the Learning Mentor/DSD to implement targets, review statistics and amend the policy as necessary
- Works with other schools and agencies to promote attendance and punctuality within the cluster
- Has responsibility for monitoring the progress of Children Looked After by the Local Authority
- Has responsibility for investigating and, where necessary, reporting incidents of children who are Missing from Education

Learning Mentor/DSD

- Maintains an overview of attendance and manages the day to day implementation of attendance plans and strategies
- Liaises with the Head teacher to produce and evaluate attendance statistics
- Works with other schools and agencies to promote attendance and punctuality within the cluster

Class teachers

- Accurately mark registers using appropriate codes in line with Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2001.
- Send any notes regarding a pupils attendance to the school office
- Report to appropriate staff any issue or problem which may affect the attendance or punctuality of a pupil
- Promote good attendance and punctuality within the classroom and the school

School office staff

- Receive, update and maintain accurate class registers in line with Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2001.
- Maintain SIMS attendance database and update on a weekly basis
- Provide reports from SIMS to governors, Head teacher and other school staff, Local Authority officers as requested
- Provide relevant information to Local Authority officers making contact with families regarding attendance and punctuality

Procedures

Registers are a legal document, care must be taken to ensure registers are marked accurately. Attendance of all pupils is monitored and evaluated regularly using the following procedures:

Registration

- Registration takes place each morning at 8.50 am and each afternoon at 12:50/1.10 pm.
- Pupils are collected from the school yard by staff and escorted into their classroom for registration
- Class teachers will enter a present mark (/) for each pupil present and an absent mark for any pupil that is absent. *Registers are a legal document. Great care must be taken to ensure registers are completed accurately on SIMS.
- Attendance of all pupils is monitored and evaluated regularly.

Responding to lateness

- Pupils arriving after 8:50am are deemed to be late. The pupil should be sent to the office where their attendance mark is entered as an ' L ' and their name and reason for lateness recorded on SIMS
- Any pupil arriving in school after 9:20am and 1:20/1:40pm times will be marked U. In case of emergency the register shows the pupil is on the premises, but they will not receive a present mark toward their overall attendance
- Parents/carers will be contacted by school if their child is persistently late.

Absence

Parents are requested to telephone school on the first day of absence to explain why their child is not at school. All absences without notification will require a "First day" call to ascertain the reason for the child's absence. The appropriate attendance symbol may then be entered in the school attendance record. If there is no answer to the call, a message is left and this is followed up on the next day. If no explanation for a short-term absence is received, a letter is sent to the parents asking for them to explain the absence. If no explanation is given, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Further attempts to contact will be made. Extended absence without contact will result in a referral to CME

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 and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. School reserves the right to request evidence of appointments.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority.

Consequently, not all absences supported by parents 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.

Absence may be authorised if:

- The pupil is too ill to attend school
- The pupil is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause i.e. Emergency medical/dental appointments
- The pupil is absent on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carer belongs (2 days maximum per year).
- The school at which the pupil is registered is not within walking distance and no suitable arrangements have been made by the Local Authority *unless the parents/carers have chosen to send their child to a school which is not within walking distance*
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return
- There is a close family bereavement
- The pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has granted Term time leave
- Term time leave where permission has been sought and where the Headteacher has agreed that there are exceptional circumstances but not in the first 2 weeks of the school year or during SATs. The Term time leave will not be authorised where the pupil's attendance is below 90%.

- The Headteacher feels the request for absence is unavoidable or adds value to the child's education.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason or consent from the Headteacher, even with the support of a parent.

Absence should not be authorised if:

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The school is not satisfied with an explanation offered
- The pupil is staying home to look after parents, siblings or the home
- The pupil is absent on special occasions e.g. birthday
- The pupil is absent on a family holiday for longer than agreed by the Head Teacher
- The pupil is absent on a family holiday not agreed by the Head Teacher
- The pupil is absent unnecessarily e.g. taken shopping, for a haircut
- The pupil is a persistent absentee (where absence is below 90%), the parent has been notified that they need to provide medical evidence for future absences and has failed to do so.

Attendance monitoring

Registers are monitored on a daily basis.

Whole school attendance is monitored twice half-termly by the Learning Mentor and a member of SLT to identify any children whose attendance is below 90% or is in danger of dropping below 90%.

If a pattern of poor attendance is formed:

- Parents will receive a record of attendance and letter from the Headteacher
- The Learning Mentor may do a home visit when a child does not attend without communication for an extended period. She may also collect children from their homes to enable attendance when required
- Children with concerning attendance are monitored for improvement. If no improvement is seen/worsens, the parent/carer is invited to discuss this further with the Learning Mentor. School Nurse/Governor for Attendance/Head teacher could also be included in the discussion.
- Persistent absence will be discussed with the local authority. If advised a referral can be made to the Attendance and Inclusion team who will meet with parent/carers, discuss, and agree strategies for improved attendance. The Learning Mentor may attend this meeting.
- Where attendance falls into the persistent absence category (i.e. less than 90%) medical evidence could be requested for all future absences whilst the child remains in this category, failure to provide such evidence could result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.
- Further discussion with the Local Authority representative for attendance can be offered to support parents in addition to a referral to MAST for practical support and guidance.
- If parents do not engage with school to improve attendance, school could exercise its right to impose a fine or pursue court action in line with the local authority policy.

Responding to absence – criteria for requesting support from the Multi Agency Support Team (MAST)

- Home/school contact has not prompted an improvement in attendance
- Poor overall attendance (e.g. below 90%) and no mitigating circumstances or acceptable reasons for absence provided to school
- If attendance continues to give cause for concern strategies will be considered and steps taken in an attempt to improve attendance and punctuality. This could include home visits from school staff, meetings in school with other professionals if deemed appropriate
- When a pupil has not attended for 10 school days the school has a statutory responsibility to inform the Local Authority.

Persistent Absence

When an absence falls below 90%, a child is classed as a 'Persistent Absentee'. Children who fall in to this category will be monitored by school in conjunction with the Local Authority.

- Liaise with the Local Authority and external services to assist and support families where needed
- Have efficient and timely monitoring and referral systems that identify attendance concerns, provide support and escalate to Social Care Fieldwork Teams when appropriate.
- Have rigorous approach to sanctioning holidays in term time, following the LA guidance
- Encourage both teaching and non-teaching staff to forge effective links with parents.
- Share good practice locally across families of schools and city wide through engagement with the Schools Attendance Forums.

Punctuality

Mundella operate an 'In the line for 10-2-9' policy. Pupils arriving late once the gates are locked will come through the main office. They will be marked as late in the register.

- Parents should inform the Office or leave a message on the school answerphone giving the reason why their child is absent from school. If no notification has been received by 9.30 am the Office will contact the parent to ascertain the reason for the absence. The Office will only contact the parent on the first day of absence due to illness – any subsequent days will be assumed to be a continuation of the illness. If the illness lasts for more than 3 days, then the parent should contact the office again to update school
- Any pupil arriving in school after 9.20 am will be marked 'U' – 'attended after registration closed'. In case of emergency during the school day, the register shows the pupil is on the premises, but they will not receive a present mark toward their overall attendance.
- Parents/carers will be contacted by school if their child is persistently late

Holidays/Term time leave

Parents/carers wishing to take a pupil out of school for a holiday should be actively discouraged. However, the Headteacher *may* authorise if the request is deemed to be 'exceptional' circumstances.

- Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday in term time
- Parents are not entitled to remove children from school for holidays: Term time leave must be applied for and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances by the Headteacher.

- Each request for absence will be considered individually, taking account of the age of the child, the time of year proposed for the trip, the exceptional circumstances, the overall attendance pattern of the pupil and the child's stage of education and progress.
- If parents wish to request time out of school, they need to request a Term time leave form, which is available from the school office or can be downloaded from the website. This form should be completed at least two weeks before the proposed absence. It is important to note that a letter from a parent does not authorise an absence, only the school's acceptance of the explanation offered by the letter can authorise the absence
- If parents take children out of school when this has not been authorised by the Headteacher school could exercise its right to impose a fine or pursue court action in line with the local authority policy.

Term time leave will not be authorised in the follow situations:

- When the Term time leave is to be taken during the first two weeks in September
- During school examinations, testing weeks
- When a pupil's attendance is below 90%
- When leave, authorised or not, of 10 days or more has already been taken by the pupil during the academic year

If unauthorised leave is taken, consideration could be given to issuing a Penalty Notice. The Legal team will, after consulting with school, consider each case taking into consideration any mitigating circumstances and make a decision. The Local Authority will inform the school of the outcome and carry out any necessary action.

Children Missing from Education

If a child was absent from school, we had had no notification as to where they were and any attempts to contact them had been unsuccessful they will be considered missing. If after 10 days and following contact to all known contact numbers / home visits/letter to known address etc. there had been no contact the Children Missing from Education Team, will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures (*see policy Children Missing from Education*)

Awards and Rewards

- Attendance assemblies are held regularly to celebrate individual pupil's attendance, class attendance and whole school attendance.
- Improved attendance is recognised and rewarded.
- Termly/Annual certificates will be awarded to pupils with 100% attendance.
- Weekly 'Chocolate biscuit' award to the class with the highest attendance.

Children in Public Care

Mr Smith and Mrs Clark are the co-ordinators who liaise with the Local Authority's Children Looked After team. CLE pupils will be set up as an Attendance Group on SIMS and their individual attendance will be checked each half term.

See also:

Sheffield Attendance Strategy 2017

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/schools-childcare/attendance-guidance-schools>