



**Attendance
Policy
September
2021**

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This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies managing attendance at May Bank Infants School.

It was produced through a process of consultation with the staff and Governors of May Bank Infants School and was adopted by the Governing Body in 2006 and reviewed by staff and Governors in 2009, 2012, 2013 and in light of the new regulations September 2014. It was reviewed again in January, April and July 2015 and in September 2016 following changes to the Code of Conduct for Issuing Penalty Notices. This version reflects changes from January 2018. It will be reviewed again in 2022-23.

This policy should be read in conjunction with a number of documents and policies including Behaviour and Discipline, Anti-Bullying, Inclusion and SEN, the SEN & Disability Act 2001, Disability, Equality Duty 2006, Equalities Policy, Safeguarding 2015.

Our Mission statement:

At May Bank Infants School we work towards:

“The whole and wholesome development of each child in a happy and caring learning environment.”

Together we Grow and Learn

Aims:

This policy outlines the school's aims to promote positive behaviour and excellent attendance, which is regarded as the responsibility of the whole school community.

It has the School's Mission Statement and Aims at its heart. It also embraces the Every Child Matters Agenda, the right of every child to:

Stay safe

Be healthy

Enjoy and achieve

Make a positive contribution

Achieve economic well-being

Principles :

Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the well being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, and support for children with medical needs.

All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable

School Responsibilities:

We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately.

We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Officers where required, in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. Where attendance issues continue, we will refer to First Response and cases will then be triaged and signposted to the most appropriate department.

We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.

Parents or Carers Responsibilities:

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.

Inform school straight away, if your child cannot attend and give the reason.

Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day

Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance

Encourage good routines at home, which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep

Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.

Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances

Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness

Ensure school has all your up to date contact details.

Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:

The Department of Education has published research into the effect that missing time from school can have on chances of succeeding in tests and exams. [February 22nd 2015 Department of Education](#)). The research is based on data from all schools in England going back several years.

The results are very clear – missing even small amounts of time from school can have a significant effect on achievement.

Admissions Register:

School keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school.

All schools (including academies) must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

Elective Home Education:

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority via Entrust at enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

Attendance data and targets:

The Local Authority does not prescribe individual school targets for attendance or persistent absence.

Our attendance target is 97%

Procedures

- The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:
- A sheet in the pack of information is given to parents when children start school deals with school attendance and reporting absences.
- Parents and Guardians are required to inform the school concerning a pupil's absence as soon as possible, and at the latest by 9.30 a.m. on the first day of absence.
- If a pupil is absent for registration and no notification has been received, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or guardian for information.
- A procedure exists in school for recording reasons for absence.
- A record will be kept in the School Office of any absences telephoned through. These will be passed on to the relevant classteacher.
- Pupils arriving after the close of registration receive a "Late Mark". After 9:30am this counts as an unauthorised absence. Regular late arrival at school, which has not been resolved satisfactorily, will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. It is important that the school office or headteacher are made aware of any mitigating circumstances, as soon as possible.
- Parents will be required to fill in the 'late book' if their child is late for school. If a parent refuses, the school will complete this to record the late arrival.

- A record is kept in the office of children who have to go home during the course of the day.
- Parents and Guardians should inform the school office concerning any medical or dental appointments or absence for religious observances that need to be held during school time.
- When an individual pupil's attendance level falls without good reason, a referral to the EWS will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

Parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices

Parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices are interventions available to promote better school attendance and behaviour. Good behaviour and attendance are essential to children's educational prospects. These measures are permissive and it is for individual governing bodies and local authorities to decide whether to use them. In exercising these powers governing bodies, head teachers and local authority officers should have regard to their safeguarding duties.

Parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices for irregular attendance apply only to pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school. Penalty notices for parents of pupils found in a public place during school hours after being excluded also apply only to children of compulsory school age who are registered at a school. Parenting contracts and parenting orders for misbehaviour can be applied to pupils outside compulsory school age e.g. in a sixth form or maintained nursery.

The Head Teacher is not able to condone term time holidays

In line with Government legislation, parents are required to complete an application form for a leave of absence and all requests must be made in writing. Any request made because of exceptional circumstances can only be judged on a case-by-case basis taking into account individual circumstances. Requests should be made in writing **at least 28 days before the period of requested absence**. The form is available from the school office.

We need to point out that, in an effort to address poor attendance and unauthorised absences from school, the local authority may decide to issue a Fixed Penalty fine and/or prosecute parents under the Education Act 1996 if a holiday is taken during term time. Parents should be aware of the Local Authority Fixed Penalty Protocol as a parental measure to improve pupil attendance in accordance with the Department of Education School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures Statutory Guidance January 2015

Penalty Notice for leave of absence

A key part of this is for all children and young people to regularly attend school, as this gives each learner the best chance to achieve their full potential.

In light of the recent Isle of Wight court case and the subsequent Supreme Court ruling on school absences, the local authority has clarified the position for parents where there may be the potential for any ambiguity and to also ensure we are fully compliant with legal

requirements. As a result, the local authority has made changes to their previous guidance to schools, parents and carers regarding absence from school. The new guidance will come into force from 1 January 2018 and is detailed below:

Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time

From 1 January 2018 any period of unauthorised leave may result in you as a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. Your head teacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by your head teacher to the local authority.

Penalty Notice for persistent lateness

Previously a pupil had to achieve 20 unauthorised late marks before a penalty notice warning could be issued. This has now changed to 10 marks, and late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. You are therefore encouraged where possible to ensure your child attends school on time. However, if your child is late you must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as they may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness

If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve-week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

Further details and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices can be obtained from the council's website www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education.

Penalty notices are fines imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalties can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school. The penalty is £60 (per child, per parent) if paid within 21 days of receipt rising to £120 (per child, per parent) if paid within 28 days. The payment must be paid direct to the local authority, not the school.

There is no requirement for attendance to be below a particular percentage before a Penalty Notice can be issued.

Parents can now receive more than one Penalty Notice per academic year.

Parents will now only receive one warning notice period for improvement in attendance in a single academic year. If attendance deteriorates again then no formal warning notice will be issued and the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory actions if unauthorised absence re-occurs.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

The Local Authority will continue to monitor all unauthorised absences from school and support head teachers in challenging parents who fail to meet their legal obligations.

In addition to using these powers, local authorities and schools can develop other practices to improve attendance.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

The Administrative Assistant, Office Manager and Headteacher manage the attendance registers and liaise with the Education Welfare Officer, although all staff are vigilant in reporting absences and asking for information concerning the children in their class.

As part of our Safeguarding Duty, the Administrative Assistant or Office Manager will contact parents who have not previously informed the school about their child's absence by 9.30am on the first day of absence. Parents are encouraged to phone the school each day regularly to update the school as to the child's condition.

The school regularly monitors and analyses attendance data to ensure appropriate action is in place to encourage good punctuality and attendance for all pupils including vulnerable groups. May Bank Infants School, in agreement with the Wolstanton Partnership of Schools and the Education Welfare Service, has agreed to adopt a colour coded system of letters to inform parents about their child's level of attendance.

The Headteacher reports to Governors termly regarding school attendance data. The policy and procedures are reviewed at least annually.

The school works closely with other agencies. The Local Authority must be informed of the absence of any child for a continuous period of 10 days or more without school's permission but school should involve the Local Support Team and take due regard of safeguarding procedures where absence of a particular child is less than 10 days but presents a cause for concern.

The school shares information with other agencies where concerns exist regarding a child's attendance.

Attendance at school is extremely important and being regularly absent will affect your child's ability to learn and do well.

Legal Framework :

The Education Act 1996;

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011 and 2013

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;

The Education Act 2002; and The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011. ;

Crime and Disorder Act 1998;

The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;

The Education Act 2005;

The Education and Inspections Act 2006;

The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments; and

The Education and Skills Act 2008.

The Equality Act 2010

Appendices:

Staffordshire Code of Conduct for Issuing Fixed penalty notices
Department for Education Guidance –Pupil Attendance including use of national codes to record attendance or reasons for absence in registers

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Signed (Chair of Governors): *R. Smith*

Date: 01.09.21

Signed (Headteacher): *P. Colley*

Date: 01.09.21