



Attendance Policy

2019 - 2020

Millbridge

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This document can be used in conjunction with the DfE School Attendance Guidance – follow the link for further information:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818204/School_attendance_July_2019.pdf

1 Introduction

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend and to put in place appropriate procedures to deal with absence. We believe that the most important factor in promoting excellent attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We reward those children whose attendance is excellent. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2 Partnership between parents and the school

At Millbridge we recognise that attendance is the responsibility of pupils, parents and school staff, who will work in partnership to ensure excellent attendance so that pupils can reach their full potential.

Matters pertaining to attendance will be mentioned and/or agreed upon;

- Within the home-school agreement
- On the school website
- In school newsletters
- In school reports
- On displays in school
- At parent/carer information meetings
- At parent/carer consultation evenings

3 Definitions

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, the parent needs to telephone the school office, on the morning of each day of absence, explaining the reason for the absence. If your child has a stomach upset/been sick, they are required to stay off school for **at least** 24 hours after the sickness.
- If possible we request that parents try to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours or at the end of the day.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers 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.

Unauthorised absence -

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

4 If a child is absent...

Parents should make every effort to make sure that their child attends school regularly and on time.

We request that parents/carers contact the school to notify the school office of any absence by telephone on the morning of every day of absence.

Parents and carers should also notify the school as soon as possible of when a pupil will be returning to school.

When a child is absent unexpectedly and no contact from home has been made to the office, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, informing the school office staff, who will then endeavour to contact a parent or guardian to ascertain the reason.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child the class teacher will take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check the safety of the child. If there are still concerns regarding the child, this will be referred to a member of the Senior Leadership Team as a safeguarding issue and the matter will be dealt with accordingly.

5 Punctuality

Punctuality is crucial to learning. Lateness into school causes disruption to learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time.

For full time school pupils (Reception onwards) the school gates are open and the playground is accessible from 8:30am. Pupils remain under the supervision of their parent/carer until the start of the school day when class teachers will come to collect pupils from the playground.

Please note: Class Teachers will collect children from the playground and doors to the school will close from 8:55am as the school day commences. Anyone arriving after this is asked to enter the building via the main reception. A member of staff will be on hand to sign your child in as they arrive but it is essential that a parent/carer is present so that the late register can be completed accurately.

Due to our Safeguarding and Fire Safety policies this is an essential process which must be adhered to in order to ensure that school staff can account for all pupils onsite at all times.

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. When signing a child/children into school the parent/carer should give a reason for the lateness which will then be added to the register. The child will then be sent to their classroom.

Afternoon registration is taken at 12.45pm for Key Stage One and EYFS and at 1.00pm for Key Stage Two. Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action may be taken via the school's Senior Leadership Team.

6 Requests for leave of absence/holidays

Absence from school affects the child's academic achievement as well as their social and personal development. The school, therefore, expects family holidays to be taken during school holiday periods.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible.

As from 1st September 2013, the DfE introduced changes to their attendance guidance in relation to term time holidays.

The amendments make it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. However, there is no exact definition of *exceptional circumstances*.

The guidance changes also stated that fines may be imposed if children are absent for 10 or more consecutive sessions (there are two sessions in a school day). In these cases, a fine of £60 will be issued (if paid within 21 days) this increases to £120 if paid within 28 days.

Any parent who intends to take their child out of school during term time **must** complete and submit an absence notification form to the school office. A copy of our absence notification form can be obtained from the school office.

7 Long term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for a number of days, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will attempt to make contact with the parent/carer. In addition to this, a member of the

Pastoral Team may also complete a home visit to offer further support and discuss the needs of your child in more detail. Where applicable and appropriate, the school will do all it can to send learning materials home, so that the pupil can keep up with their school work. Please refer to our 'Managing Pupils with Medical Conditions' Policy.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

8 Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the school will send a letter regarding the absences. If these continue parents will be asked in to school to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. These actions are in place to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

The governors, supported by the SHARE Multi Academy Trust, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

9 Rewards for excellent attendance

All the children who have 100% attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at an assembly at the end of the term. There are special awards for any child who has 100% attendance for the whole year. The class with the highest attendance every week also receive a class treat.

On a weekly basis the Senior Leadership Team also gathers data on House attendance which incorporates all children across the school and recognises the House with the highest overall attendance. As a reward for this, the House is given additional points which are used in a whole school context to determine which House Team are given a reward at the end of each half term period.

10 Attendance targets

The school sets targets each year and this stands at 97%. Any pupil at or above 97% will also receive acknowledgment of their achievement. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors at the annual target setting meeting. All attendance data has to be shared with the DfE. These targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures, in comparison with the national expectation.

11 Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance and they will request an annual report from the Head of School. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy and for seeing it is carried out. The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school keeps accurate records on file for a minimum of three years.

Pupil's individual attendance will be reported on their annual report and at parent's evenings. The school office staff and the Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for monitoring attendance and for following up absences in an appropriate way. If there is a concern about a child's absence they will contact the parent immediately. Alerts will be raised when attendance and/or punctuality falls below the accepted standard (97%).

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every two years or earlier if considered necessary.

12 Attendance monitoring procedures

The school recognises the link between poor attendance and safeguarding/child protection and SEND issues. Therefore, careful analysis of attendance is undertaken.

The SLT team have half termly meetings to discuss individual children, interventions to be put in place and overall trends or patterns in the attendance figures. Letters are sent to parents from school if their child's attendance is

below 90%. Persistent absentees of attendance below 90% may be asked to sign an attendance contract, which will involve a meeting with the Head of Inclusion and possible home visits from members of the Pastoral Team.

If swift improvements are not made, Share MAT/the Governing Body reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians. This is due to the fact that at this point, it could be considered that parents/guardians are repeatedly failing to accept their legal responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

As a school we look closely for 'hot spots' e.g. repeated absence on a particular day of the week. The need to take into account the views of both parents/carers and pupils is recognised and opportunities to discuss any issues are encouraged, whilst highlighting the importance of regular school attendance.

School reviews the use of attendance codes in consultation with the DfE and chases up with parents/carers if school has not received any explanation regarding a child's absence.