



Attendance Policy

2020 - 2021

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.
- 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. Children may enter the school and go to their classrooms from this time.

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 into 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 a termly 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.

SLT have weekly 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 school staff are unable to make contact with families whose children are absent from school, concerns may be shared with the Police who will conduct a welfare check.

If school is unclear as to the whereabouts of any of its pupils, Child Missing in Education (CMiE) protocols will be followed.

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 the school has not received any explanation regarding a child's absence.

Attendance policy addendum

Attendance during national lockdowns or other emergencies requiring extended school closures

There may be times when pupils are asked not to attend school for extended period of time; for example, if the government directs schools to close to stop the spread of a pandemic. In these circumstances, pupils may either be asked to work from home or continue to attend school, either on a rota or daily basis. Some pupils may be given priority or encouraged to physically attend school. This may include pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities, who need additional support to access learning, or pupils under the supervision of a social worker. The school will share information about priority groups as soon as possible after closures are announced.

Pupils who are asked or required to attend school will be subject to all our usual attendance procedures.

Pupils who are asked to remain at home will be expected to continue to study remotely. When this happens, the following applies:

- Pupils should attend all 'live' lessons where provided, i.e. lessons that teachers are delivering to classes over the internet. This is the best way for pupils to learn. The technology allows pupils to submit work and ask questions. Students are expected to remain in the lesson for the whole duration. Staff will check attendance throughout the lesson.
- Teachers will record attendance to each session.
- Students are expected to 'arrive' to remote lessons within the first few minutes of it commencing, otherwise teaching staff may issue record a 'late' mark.
- There will be occasions when technology fails, for example a school's network may crash. Pupils will be recorded as present where the problem is beyond their control. The teacher will try to set tasks by other means and determine how activities should be adjusted.
- If it is not possible to access a live lesson, for example if access to a suitable device is limited, pupils may access a recording of the lesson. They should submit their responses to any learning activities the teacher sets at the earliest possible opportunity. These responses will be tracked, to help confirm attendance.
- Sometimes, schools may not be able to deliver 'live' lessons. This may be because younger children struggle to access the technology or not enough pupils have access to the right resources. The teacher will then upload work electronically and track responses. Pupils' responses will be used to measure attendance.
- Families struggling to provide remote access may be eligible to receive support and should contact the school to ask for help.
- If it is not possible to access lessons remotely, the school will provide suitable work in the form of paper packs that can be collected from school. It should be completed and returned to school at the earliest opportunity. In this case, a member of staff will make contact with the pupil from time to time, to check his or her welfare and whether there are any questions about the learning activities.
- Staff will keep attendance records and inform parents when remote lessons are missed or work is not submitted.
- Parents should notify the school if a pupil is too unwell to engage in learning that day. The normal processes for informing school that a pupil is unwell will apply.
- Staff will contact parents if pupils miss lessons or fail to hand in work. The aim will be to agree with parents strategies for improving attendance.
- If a pupil persistently fails to engage with remote learning, we may need to take further action. (See Appendix 1: Non-Engagement Process)

Appendix 1: Non-Engagement Process

Monitor

- Keep a close eye on your engagement register
- Explore gaps in lessons
- Dojo message parents/pupils to find out where tasks are for missing lessons:
 - e.g. *'I have noticed Child A's maths work is missing from yesterday, is there anything I can do to help?'*
- Note this on your register as **'Msg'** to indicate a message has been sent (this can be overridden with the engagement mark if the work turns up).

Persist

- Pay more in-depth attention to your register - which subjects are slipping? Which children are becoming a concern?
- After a day of no-learning at all, contact the parent again via Dojo, or telephone this time:
 - e.g. *'I am just contacting to see if I can offer any support, Child A has not engaged in any learning from yesterday.'*
- Note this on your register as **'Msg'** or **'Phone'**
- After 2 days of no-learning, make a phonecall to the parent, make clear the expectation that the pupil must engage with lessons - **log this on CPOMS so that the whole team is aware**
- Note on your register as **'Phone'**
- Involve Phase Leader and/or Head of Inclusion if you need some support removing barriers as a result of the above call, e.g. help can be provided with Dojo/Teams or a device/paper pack can be dropped off
- Chase this up with Dojo messages if necessary:
 - e.g. *'I spoke to you yesterday about Child A not completing any learning, I have noticed there is still no evidence of tasks being completed.'*

Escalate

- If there is still no engagement after the above steps, escalate the Head of Inclusion
- Note this escalation on your register as **'Hol'**
- The Head of Inclusion will, in collaboration with the rest of SLT, discuss each 'concern' at the weekly Behaviour and Safety meeting to unpick steps taken so far and make decisions about next steps.
- Next steps could include:
 - A more formal 'concern' phonecall to further unpick barriers
 - A more formal home-visit, both to further explore barriers discussed or provide support to overcome these
 - A formal letter stating that we have concerns and that a lack of engagement could result in the pupil being considered as 'vulnerable'
 - The pupil may be invited back into school as 'vulnerable' if all steps have been taken to remove barriers and there is still no engagement
- Once the case has been escalated, **you** still have a role in evaluating the impact of any actions taken:
 - Liaise closely with the Head of Inclusion to take the pupil off caseload if engagement increases
 - Continue with the 'persist' process if engagement does not increase (keep on with calls and messages to follow up Hol's actions) and 're-refer' to Hol if concerns continue.