

MALTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY
2020.21

Rationale

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

DEFINITIONS

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark in the register.
- Holiday in excess of 10 days.

PROCEDURES

- Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together – this is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Prevention Service at the Local Authority.
- The Prevention Service will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed he can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child.
- Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Prevention Service themselves to ask for help or information. The service is independent of the school and will give impartial advice. The telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

- School starts at 9.00am prompt. At 8.55am the internal bell is rung. The children are expected to be in class at 9.00am.
- Those children who are not present to answer their names but arrive before 9.30am will be marked as late by the school office. The registers close at 9.30am and any children that are not marked as present by this time will be marked as absent for that session.
- **The registers will be updated shortly after 9.00am, to enable the Attendance Officer to commence the first day calls to establish reasons for absence.**
- The registers will be kept in school for three years and any letters/record of phone calls from parents will also be kept for the life of the register

Attendance and punctuality is monitored fortnightly by the Head Teacher, Parent Support Adviser (PSA) and Attendance Officer.

The school applies the following procedure in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Authorisation Procedures

The law states that only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation in relation to a particular absence does not, in itself, oblige the school to accept it. The school does not have to accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. Where there is any doubt about the explanation offered, or where no explanation is forthcoming at all, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

In the interest of safety and welfare of all children school ask parents to inform them of any absence by 9.15am on the first day of absence.

School can be informed using **text or phone call where you can leave a message following the relevant instructions**. If school has not had contact by this time then school will make a 'first day of absence' phone call to parents/carers to ascertain the reason for the child's absence. If the parents/cares cannot be contacted, school will use its discretion to make contact using other telephone numbers that have been made available until an absence has been explained.

If the attendance officer has been unable to contact parents/carers by telephone to ascertain the reason for their child's absence, a letter will **be sent out by the end of the following day of absence, requesting an explanation**. Parents then have **48 hours from the date of the letter** in which to contact the school to offer an explanation which, if accepted by the school, will authorise the absence. If no contact is made by parents within **48 hours from the date of the letter** the absence will **be marked as unauthorised**.

In the case of unusually high absences and /or failure to respond **to any previous communication from the school, a further letter will be sent** to parents, informing them of the school's intention to inform the Prevention Service. In the event of a school Attendance Panel meeting being necessary a further letter will be issued.

Where an improvement in attendance has been noted a letter will be sent to parents to acknowledge the improvement and thank them for their support.

Absences will be authorised if:

- The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurs on a day set aside for religious observation by the religious body to which the pupil belongs
- There is a family bereavement
- There are other reasons considered by the headteacher for authorisation.

Family Holidays in Term Time

Details of school term dates are available on our website so that parents/carers may plan family holidays accordingly. Absence for the purpose of family holidays WILL NOT be authorised by the school. Exceptional circumstances may be considered by the Headteacher. Any request for leave should be made in advance, holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If a parent/carer is NOT given authority for leave then referring to the North Yorkshire School Unauthorised Absences notice, they must ensure their child is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first five days of each and every fixed period of permanent exclusion. A public place means any highway or any place to which the public have access.

We ask that parents/carers who would like to request leave from school, for example for a term time holiday make an appointment to speak to our attendance officer Mrs Peacock.

Previously, leave could be requested by completing a form collected at the school office however, due to the large number of requests, we have now taken the decision to ask that you attend a face to face meeting. At this meeting you will be made aware of your child's current attainment and progress, informed of any events or activities they will miss during your absence, made aware of the attendance policy and the possibility of catch up sessions and work missed and asked to provide evidence if your holiday is based upon the needs of your employer.

It is a legal requirement to inform us if you are taking your child out of school and failure to do so could result in your child being removed from the school's register if we are unable to contact you.

If children are absent from school due to an unauthorised family holiday they will be expected to catch up work missed during a proportion of their social time when they return to school. 'Social time' will include planned whole school activities. The amount of time children will be expected to catch up will be age-appropriate and dependent upon the length of holiday. This policy aligns with Ofsted's expectation that *teaching, learning and assessment support challenges learners to make sustained and substantial progress in all aspects of their study programme*. Teaching enables learners who fall behind to catch up swiftly and the most-able to excel.

There are no statutory regulations that specify the length of pupils' breaks at any stage including the early years' foundation stage (EYFS).

Medical Appointments

Parents are required to complete a request for absence form if they wish to take their child out for a medical appointment. A form can be collected from the school office.

Where appointments are given by hospitals and other specialists we will authorise an absence, provided proof is seen by the school office.

Non-emergency GP and dental appointments which have been made by parents during the school day will NOT be authorised and time missed will result in a child having to 'catch up' missed learning during social times.

Late Arrival

All children who arrive at school after 9.05am must report to the front office where they will be registered as late. A satisfactory explanation for lateness must be given by parent/carers to the Attendance Officer. This will be recorded. If the school does not find the explanation satisfactory the child will be marked as an unauthorised late (U). Children who are late to school must not be sent into school alone. Key Stage 2 children who walk to school alone must explain why they are late and a telephone call home will be made.

Any school time missed over the course of the week will be added up. Children will attend 'catch up' on Friday lunchtimes with the Headteacher or a Senior Leader. If children are absent on Friday, this time will roll over to the next school day.

If a child is late for two or more sessions in a week the Headteacher will be informed in a fortnightly report and the parents of these children will be contacted via a letter.

No contact from parents and persistent lateness will result in an appointment being made for parents to meet with Headteacher, PSA and Attendance Officer. No contact from parents and failure to attend this meeting will result in school contacting the Prevention Service or Children's Social Care.

Where an improvement in punctuality has been noted a letter will be sent to parents to acknowledge the improvement and thank them for their support.

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

- The Governing body agree attendance targets and this year's target is **96.5%** (**3.5% absence**)
- The children all belong to a 'house' within school and there will be a house reward based upon attendance on a weekly/termly basis in an attendance assembly upon the last day of every half term.
- The 'Attendance Trophy' will be awarded to the class with the highest attendance on a half termly basis
- Class teachers will award their classes with their own individual team incentive based upon good attendance
- Letters to parents of children whose attendance is causing concern will be sent on a termly basis. This will be agreed with the Attendance Officer and the Head teacher
- Children will be rewarded individually who significantly improve their lateness or attendance (certificate). Or as a school who have been given targeted appropriate support, and a vast improvement has been made.

Our SIMS system is able to manage the attendance as we complete the registers twice daily at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. The teacher or the attendance officer will be informed of any reasons for not being in school and will make the decision whether to authorise it or not or alternatively involve the Headteacher.

At the discretion of the school in certain cases where absence is sustained work may be sent home for the child to complete.

Our Attendance Officer will make the first day of absence phone calls and keep a record of who was spoken to and the reason for absence, transferring the information provided by parents/carers onto the computer. Any concerns about whether an absence should be authorised or not will be **referred to the Headteacher. The information will also be entered into the pupil's attendance record within the SIMS system.**

The **Headteacher** will receive weekly reports regarding concerns about individual children's lateness or absence, which they will then follow up accordingly. The Headteacher will also be responsible for making the final decisions regarding whether to authorise the absence or not.

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. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the following related policies:

- Equality Scheme and Equality policy
- SEND policy
- Behaviour policy
- Anti-Bullying policy
- Admissions policy
- Child Protection policy