



Attendance Policy

Autumn 2017

Unlocking Every Child's Potential

Agreed by staff:

Ratified by Governing Body:

Review Date:

This policy has been written in accordance with our school vision and aims. At the heart of every decision is the recognition that children have rights and responsibilities. Where possible, children and parents are consulted when decisions are made using our school council and pupil/parent perceptions.

Statement of Intent

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes (see appendix A).

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

Under the Education Pupil Registration Regulations 2006 (R12) deletions from the School Roll must be reported to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, by the school giving reasons for that pupil's removal prior to deletion.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

Holidays in term time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and **no holiday will be authorised in term time.**

Head teachers have the discretion to grant leave, but they should only do so in exceptional circumstances. If a headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Parents can be fined for taking their child out of school during term time without consent from the school.

In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school (usually the head teacher). As from 1st September 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amended Regulation 7 to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school from granting leave of absence to a pupil, except where an advance application has been made by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress. There is no entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time, however, you may apply to the school for leave of absence if you believe there are exceptional circumstances.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken, the case will be referred to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

An application for leave of absence is available from the school office (appendix 2), they are considered on an individual basis.

Why regular attendance is so important:

Learning:- Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. Please see *appendix 1* for a calculation of learning time lost.

Safeguarding:- Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

Attendance

Behaviour Management

Health and Safety

Access to the Curriculum

Anti- bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletter;
- Report to you termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to Essex County Council using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers 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
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately through a letter.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan if the letter proves not enough to rectify the situation. The plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

Roles Responsibilities and Procedures:

School

- Take the register at the beginning of each session
- 9.00-9.10 is first registration—1.00-1.10pm is 2nd registration. 9.10 – 9.30 is a late mark in the register. After 9.30am it becomes an unauthorised absence.
- If a child is not in school by 9.10am then the parents will be contacted by phone or by text. If parents/carers are not contactable by 10.00am the school will make a home visit. If this is not successful in contacting parents/carers then a local police officer will be informed.
- No holiday will be authorised in term time.
- Internal truancy will be reported to the head teacher who will call the child's parents.
- If a child has poor attendance then the parents are contacted in the first instance. The parents and school work together to ensure the child attends regularly. If no progress is made then the case gets reported to the EWO.
- Following periods of absence, a child will receive support on reintegrating them back into school. This will be reviewed on an individual basis.

Parents/carers

- If their child is absent, parents are required to call/email school. A written letter is required explaining why the child was off sick when they return to school.
- There is an expectation to work with school and/or EWS to resolve any attendance issues.
- To fill in a leave of absence form if for any extraordinary reasons they need to take a pupil out of school during term time.

Pupils

- Expectation that they attend regularly and are on time for registration and lessons
- Register by being present in class when the register is taken by 9.00am.,
- If they are late, they must report to the office to sign in.

MECES(Missing in Education and Child Employment Service)

- Works within locally based Area Attendance Teams, multi-disciplinary teams schools and families to promote good attendance.
- Carries out statutory duties on behalf of the Local Authority to ensure parents/carers fulfil their legal requirements in relation to school attendance

The school may refer a pupil to MECES where attendance remains a concern following school intervention. The MECES will work with schools and families to address attendance issues. However, if attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parents/carers

Attendance Targets

Each school has an annual attendance target set by governors. It is expected that the whole school community will work together to achieve this target. Our target is 97%

Attainment is strongly linked to attendance, and research has shown that if pupils are to achieve their full potential, they must attend school regularly.

Appendix 1

Descriptor	Threshold Attendance	Actual Attendance	Whole Days Absent	Learning Hours Lost
Excellent	100% 99%	190 days 188 days	0 2	0 10
Good	98% 97% 96%	186 days 184 days 182.5 days	4 6 7.5	20 30 37.5
Cause for concern	95% 94% 93% 92% 91%	180.5 days 179 days 177 days 175 days 173 days	9.5 11 13 15 17	47.5 55 65 75 85

Descriptor	Threshold Attendance	Actual Attendance	Whole Days Absent	Learning Hours Lost
Unsatisfactory	90% 89% 88% 87%	171 days 169 days 167 days 165 days	19 21 23 25	95 105 115 125
Serious Cause for Concern	86%	163 days	27	135
Critical	85% 84% 83% 82% 81% 80%	161.5 days 159.5 days 158 days 156 days 154 days 152 days	28.5 30.5 32 34 36 38	142.5 152.5 160 170 180 190

Appendix 2

**APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME
Mountnessing C of E Primary School**

Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school. As from 1st September 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amended Regulation 7 to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school from granting leave of absence to a pupil, except where an advance application has been made by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress. There is no entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time, however, you may apply to the school for leave of absence if you believe there are exceptional circumstances.

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Important: Please complete one application per child.

Name of Child	
DOB	
Class	
Date of first day absence	
Date of last day of absence	
Number of days requested	

Important: I confirm that a letter is attached outlining the 'exceptional circumstances' for which a leave of absence is being applied for. I acknowledge that it is entirely the decision of the Head Teacher whether or not the reason provided constitutes an exceptional circumstance. Furthermore, I also understand that failure to attach a letter will result in this application not being considered.

Signed	
Print name	
Relationship to child	

Date	
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Please ensure supporting letter is clearly marked with child's name and class.