



Attendance Policy

Approved by:	Head teacher, SLT, GDPR Officer and Full Governing Body	Date: November 2020
Last reviewed on:	September 2023	
Next review due by:	September 2024	
Version number:	6	

The Attendance Policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Anti-bullying policy
- Exclusion Policy
- Behaviour policy
- Equal Opportunities policy
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities policy
- Safeguarding and Child protection policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school'.

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2013

Please be aware that this policy must be read in conjunction with Crawley Schools Attendance and Punctuality Policy (01/09/17 reviewed January 2018).

Maidenbower Junior School expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times.

We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved. At Maidenbower Junior School, the Governors have agreed to make this target that of 97%.

Overall Aims:

1. To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
2. To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
3. To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
4. To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
5. To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

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6. To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.

Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality:

The Legal Framework:

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise; to send them to school regularly once they are on the register.
- The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance.

Head Teacher:

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquiries.
- To oversee the analysis of weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the School Administrator to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

School Administrator:

- To liaise with office staff in respect of the first response procedure when a child does not arrive at school with no reason received.
- To monitor weekly attendance data for their year groups.
- To liaise with office staff, the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To promptly inform the SLT, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality.
- To check weekly data and County e-pods
- To produce half termly/yearly data for HT, SLT and Governors to review and analyse.
- To record reasons for absence and update class registers.
- To implement the daily checking of registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To contact parents/carers by letter, following 5 instances of lateness or over 30 mins of lost learning.
- To contact parents/carers by phone and letters, following a reduction of learning under 96% after the first half term.
- To maintain MJS attendance records in line with this policy. (See appendix)
- To liaise with feeder Infant schools regarding Year 2 children with late and absence concerns
- To liaise with Secondary schools regarding families with late and absence concerns
- To liaise with and report to outside agencies.
- To report to the Local Authority, as requested.
- To maintain clear communication with the SLT regarding attendance and punctuality.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.

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- To support HT with the promotion of good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- Inform parents of school procedures in an attendance newsletter.

Staff:

- To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day immediately on arrival and after lunchtime break
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To promptly inform the HT and School Administrator, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

Parents:

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, colds etc. parents should inform the school and attempt to bring them in. If they do not get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. If a pupil has a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know prior to the appointment and provide a copy of it. Pupils' should be brought back to school after appointments. Parents are advised to make such appointments after school or in the holidays if at all possible as these appointments affect pupil attendance percentages. Pupils should miss as little time as possible.

Therefore, parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Arrange medical and dental appointments after school or in the holidays wherever possible.
- Telephone the school every day of absence for their child. School will text the first family contact number, if no communication is received and subsequently telephone each contact number, until a reason is provided. If no contact can be made, the matter is referred to SLT and in rare cases, the inability to make contact is referred to Pupil Entitlement Investigations.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.
- Create a Health Care Plan with the Medical Welfare Officer if there are long-term sickness concerns.
- If a child has a high level of illness, the school reserves the right to request appointment and medical evidence. If none is forthcoming, school will unauthorise the absence and the family may receive a FPN. (It is advised by the Government and Health Authorities that a normal, healthy child might have a maximum of 6 days illness per year).

- If a child is absent from school through illness before or after a holiday, the school may unauthorise the absence until medical evidence is provided. If none is forthcoming, school may unauthorise the absence and the family may receive a FPN.
- We refer to County for any child refuser.

Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:

Aims:

- To ensure good attendance and punctuality (above 97%) is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality (above 97%) through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

Half termly Celebration Attendance Assemblies

Celebration Assemblies are held on a Friday.

Gold, Silver and Bronze Cups, together with certificates, are awarded to those classes with the highest percentage attendance within Lower and Upper school. Every half term a Platinum Certificate is awarded to each class, within Lower and Upper school, with the highest overall percentage attendance for that half term.

At the end of the school year, higher attaining attendance and other assembly awards are added together to enable rewards for a particular house.

School Attendance Newsletter

A School Attendance Newsletter at the beginning of every half term, is used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. It regularly includes sections reminding parents of our school attendance target and what that means in terms of number of days absent. It also includes information about any initiatives, which the school is using, to promote attendance and punctuality and news of celebration.

Nudges are added to this newsletter.

Monitoring First Day Absence

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, an absence text/call will be made. The SA Officer will liaise with office staff to monitor the First Response procedure:

- Text parents' contact number(s).
- If no response is received after an hour, office staff will notify the SA Officer and SLT and telephone the first contact for the pupil. If no response is received after an hour of the initial telephone call, all contacts will be telephoned. SLT will consider the need for a home visit if no response continues.
- In rare cases, the inability to make contact is referred to Pupil Entitlement Investigations.

Extended Holidays / MJS Procedures

Reference Crawley Schools 'Parental Request to School to Authorise an Absence in Exceptional Circumstances' form.

In line with the Local Authority, 'Leave in Term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, leave for pupils during term time is not authorised under any circumstances.

- The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/children.
- The School reserves the right to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice if a child is absent from school either on an unauthorised holiday for 5 days or more or for any other reason apart from illness.

- The School reserves the right to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice if a child, who is absent on unauthorised holiday for less than 5 days, is then absent for the remaining week for illness or without a reason.

Penalty Notices

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and of legal action being taken.

If a family request 4 days absence for holiday but then takes an additional day making a total of 5 days holiday, school reserves the right to unauthorise the additional fifth day and issue a FPN.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £120 per parent, per child and must be paid within 28 days.

- If this is paid within 21 days the amount reduces by 50% to £60.00.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority may prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.
- A family may receive two FPN's in one calendar year before the case goes straight to Court but only three FPN's across the whole of the child's school life before the case goes straight to Court.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine parents up to £2,500 per child on conviction, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- 'Parents' include any person responsible for the child or who has care of him/her or adopted/fostered etc.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in parents having a criminal record.

Signed by :



Simon Pike
Head Teacher

Signed by :



Liisa Bracher
School Administrator