



Attendance policy

Approved date	January 2019
Date for review	January 2021
Signed by Chair of Governors	
Signed by Headteacher	

At Monksmead School we are committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, enabling our pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Good attendance helps the children in our school community to maximise their learning.

We recognise that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil progress.

Good attendance helps the children in our school's community to maximise their learning. This policy aims to support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Monksmead School aims to encourage and assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality and reduce Persistent Absence in order that all pupils are assisted in reaching their potential.

Monksmead School believes that good school attendance assists children and young people to achieve the following 5 outcomes:

- To be healthy
- To stay safe
- To enjoy and achieve
- To make a positive contribution
- To achieve economic well-being

Responsibilities & Expectations

- The school will provide a safe learning environment and maintain records of attendance according to legislation and guidance on a daily basis.
- Only the Headteacher can authorise absence.
- The school will provide attendance details on the child's annual report.
- The school will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality.
- Details of poor attendance/punctuality will be reported to subsequent schools.
- Parents/carers have a legal obligation to ensure their child attends school and do not automatically have the right to take them on holiday during term time. Absences from school affect the whole school community, not just the child concerned.
- Parents/carers are expected to ensure their child attends school regularly, on time, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents/carers must inform the school on the **1st day** of absence and give a reason for their child's absence. Parents/carers will also maintain **daily** contact with the school until child returns to school.
- All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually.
- All pupils must remember to hand any note to school providing reasons for absent.
- All pupils will be expected to be ready to learn.

If a Child is Absent

The school will:

- Record notification of absence by telephone.
- If notification is not received, telephone parents/carers by 10am on the first day of absence and record the outcome of the call.
- Maintain regular contact with parents/carers throughout the child's absence.
- Keep written notification from parents/carers on file.
- Inform parents/carers in writing if a child's attendance falls below 95%.
- Write to parents/carers requesting a reason for absence if it has not been provided.
- Record any absences as authorised or unauthorised according to current DfE guidelines.

Lateness

Lateness means that a child misses important early information, and may have to make a conspicuous entrance into class or assembly; it is also disruptive for the children who arrive on time. A pattern of lateness gives a message to the child that punctuality is unimportant. The school is sympathetic to family circumstances, but punctuality is encouraged even when there are difficulties. At these times, it is essentially important that a regular routine is followed.

- Registers are taken at **9.05am**. Any child arriving after that will be recorded as 'late'.
- Afternoon sessions begin at 1.15pm when the register is taken again. Children returning after home lunch after this time will be recorded as late.
- Registers will close at **9.15am** and 1.15pm. When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and parent provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session using the correct code. When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session.
- When a pupil arrives late having missed registration, parents/carers will be expected to sign the late book and give a reason for their child's lateness.
- It is important that children are safe and therefore accounted for at all times during the day. Because of this, any unexplained absence is monitored very carefully.
- Parents/Carers whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by a member of school staff who will work with parent(s) to bring about an improvement in punctuality

Absence due to illness

- Notification must be provided for all absences from school and the school will always follow this up. Absences are authorised by the Headteacher only. In most cases, absence is genuine and marked as authorised on the register
- ***The school operates a '1st day response' policy. This means that if we have not been notified by 10am to tell us why a child is not coming to school that day we will contact his/her parents/carers.***
- Parents/carers must give specific reasons for absence – being 'ill' is not enough.
- Parents/carers may leave messages regarding absence on the school answering system (option 1).
- Parents/carers may be asked to provide evidence stating that their child is too ill to attend school.
- Unless parents/carers have been given a particular time of absence through illness by a doctor, they are expected to contact the school **each day** to let us know what is happening. The details of telephone calls are recorded and monitored.
- Registers are monitored on a regular basis to look at patterns of absence, identify individuals or groups absences, attendance of siblings, etc. The school may ask to see parents/carers if attendance is not satisfactory.

Absence due to Medical/Dental Appointments

- We would request that all medical and dental appointments, if possible, are made after school, at weekends or during the holidays.
- If a medical/dental appointment is known in advance, parents/carers must notify the school in writing. If an emergency appointment is made please phone the school before 9am.
- Notification must be given if a child needs to leave school during the day. The relevant book must be signed at the office and again on return.

Examinations and interviews

- The Headteacher may authorise absence for the purpose of an interview or examination in preparation for secondary transfer, or for official external exams (for example, music exams). Please write in advance to request this.
- The school will request, and expect, that the child will return to school following their interview or examination. Failure to return from a morning appointment will result in the afternoon absence being unauthorised.

Days of Religious Observance

- Absence for religious observance will be authorised if the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.
- Parents should notify the school office before the date.
- Absence is not permitted for attending religious festivals, pilgrimages or conferences.

Term Time Holiday

Only the Headteacher can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations which came into effect on 1st September 2013 remove all references to family holidays and extended leave for holidays in term time. Therefore:

- **NO** leave of absence will be granted.
- Parents may make an application for leave of absence for an exceptional circumstance.
- The Headteacher will decide whether this application will be granted.
- The Headteacher will decide the number of days granted for any leave of absence.
- Leave of absence taken without permission will be unauthorised.
- Monksmead school will decide what is deemed as an exceptional circumstance.
- A child can be removed from the school's registers if they fail to return from a leave of absence where permission has been granted after both school and LA have tried to locate the pupil(s) or if there are 20 days continuous unauthorised absences and both the local authority and school have failed to locate pupil.

Failure to attend school before and after school holidays

It is hoped that you will give your support and cooperation on the matter and ensure your child attends all statutory school days, by working together, the matter of fixed penalty notices should not need to arise.

- If your child is missing from school on the days before and after school holidays, the school will request additional evidence to support your claim to ensure the child is genuinely unwell and families are not extending the holiday period.
- Please ensure if you are travelling abroad you leave enough time to ensure flight delays do not affect your child's return date. Term dates are on the school's website for reference.

Monitoring Attendance

- Registers will be taken at **9.05am** each morning. Any child arriving after that will be recorded as being 'late'.
- Registration details are transferred to an electronic database, which is the legal document.
- Parents/carers whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted to request an improvement in punctuality.
- The school will follow up persistent lateness, all absences and pupils with low levels of attendance.

- The school will monitor attendance on a daily/weekly basis.
- Parents/carers who have not provided a reason for their child's absence by the end of the week will be contacted.
- Each half term, registers will be monitored and parents/carers of pupils with less than **95%** attendance will be notified.
- Pupils with less than **85%** attendance will automatically be discussed with the Attendance Improvement Officer and appropriate action identified and agreed.

Records

- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will write to the parents/carers.
- When attendance falls below **95%**, parents/carers will be contacted. When it falls below **85%**, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting and the pupil will be made known to the AIO.

Rewards for Good Attendance

At the end of each academic term certificates will be issued to any child who has achieved 100% attendance.

Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil is classed as a 'Persistent Absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level damages any child's educational potential and we will try to work with parents/carers to improve attendance rates quickly. Persistent Absentees are monitored carefully through our pastoral system and this is combined with academic support where absence adversely affects attainment. All persistent absentees will be made known to the Attendance Improvement Officer.

Integrated Working

- Monksmead School will work with other agencies and professionals to ensure that our pupils receive all the support available to achieve good attendance

Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)

- Monksmead School works in partnership with the allocated AIO to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school.
- The Headteacher and appropriate staff meet with the AIO for regular meetings to discuss and review attendance.
- Monksmead School and the AIO work with identified individual pupils and their parents to improve poor attendance.
- When the attendance does not improve sufficiently and after discussion with the AIO, the school may apply for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued, invite parents/carers to a meeting to offer support or may make a formal referral to the Local Authority.

Exceptional Circumstances

- The school will actively seek to work with parents/carers where there is a genuine difficulty with attendance.

- Support strategies will be put in place for individual pupils where appropriate.
- When a child has an illness that means he/she will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send work home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the home education support service, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

- A penalty notice will be issued with regard to unauthorised absence if a pupil fails to attend school as required without a genuine explanation.
- The pupil must have at least **15 sessions** (half days) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term and the school must have sent a formal warning to the parent.
- **The amount payable is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect of each child.**
- Primary responsibility for issuing penalty notices rests with the Local Authority and is not delegated. In Hertfordshire all parties agree that the Integrated Service for Learning Attendance Teams administer the scheme and issue penalty notices on behalf of police, schools, academies and other settings to ensure fairness and consistency and in the event that subsequent legal action may need to be taken.
- The issuing of penalty notices will comply with the code of conduct and practice as determined by the Local Authority. There is no statutory right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued. The Local Authority may withdraw a notice if it has been issued incorrectly. If the penalty notice has been issued in accordance with Hertfordshire's Code of Conduct there is no facility to overturn the decision to issue the notice.
- Failure to pay the fine within 28 days will result in either a prosecution for the offence to which the notice applies, or withdrawal of the notice (limited circumstances apply).
- Prosecution will be taken by the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996, section 444. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances relating to the pupil's absence will be taken into account, when considering legal action. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' will be determined by the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the Local Authority. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' might include the death of a close relative, certain medically recognised conditions, awaiting SEN placement, specific child protection concerns, change of provision. Legal proceedings can be considered at any stage if no progress has been made and no exceptional circumstances are deemed to exist.
- All decisions to prosecute (or not) rest with the Local Authority.

Staff Responsible for Attendance Matters

- Headteacher
- All class teachers
- Governing Body

Monitoring & Review

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that 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.
- This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years or earlier if deemed necessary.