



Montgomerie Primary School Attendance Policy

Policy amended and agreed: January 2017

Policy due for review: January 2019

Statement of Intent

- Montgomerie Primary School is committed to providing a full and beneficial educational experience to all its pupils, if this commitment is to succeed good pupil attendance is imperative.
- The School will do all it can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils.
- Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed speedily.
- Parents have a vital role to play in ensuring that pupils attend School regularly and on time.
- Individual parents will be contacted immediately if concerns arise over their child's attendance or punctuality with a view to resolving any problems that may have arisen.
- The School will seek advice from the Education Welfare Service should queries arise around pupil attendance.
- The school will seek advice from the Missing Education and Child Employment Service should queries arise around pupil attendance.

Rights and Responsibilities

- The School requires pupils to attend school regularly, on time and properly equipped and ready to learn.
- The School requires good attendance and will communicate with parents as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.
- The School staff will promote matters of attendance and punctuality. The School staff will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.
- The School will work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve issues, which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible.
- The School will include in reports a registration certificate on pupil's attendance at least annually.
- Parents must ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. Parents are responsible for immediately informing the school of the reason for any absence by telephone call on the morning of every day of any absence. **This must be confirmed in writing when a child returns to school** (consideration, whenever known, will be given to procedures where parents have difficulty with the written word, or when English is not the first language).
- Parents will be required to present the school with **evidence** after the **third day** of a child's absence due to sickness.
- If attendance problems do develop, the school requires parents to work actively with school staff to solve them.
- Parents can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record.
- Parents do not have a right to take children on holiday in term time (see Leave of Absence Policy)
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% parents will be contacted and may be required to attend a formal meeting with the Head Teacher; all meetings will be documented and minuted. The school will refer a pupil to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service when attendance remains a concern following school intervention. The Missing

Education and Child Employment Service will work with schools and families to address attendance issues. However, if attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parent/carers and could include a Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution.

- If a pupil is absent for 10 sessions (5 days) and the parents have failed to notify the school and the school has been unable to make contact with the parents the school is required to inform the Local Authority.

Registration

Type of Registration and general register maintenance

At Montgomerie School a manual registration system is used.

Manual registers must be marked in ink and where an alteration is necessary this must be clearly identified showing both the original entry and change. Correction fluid must not be used.

Registers will be returned to the school office at the end of the registration period for safety and will be secured but accessible in case of an emergency.

All notes from parents regarding a pupil's absence will be stored on the pupil's file and retained for the remainder of the term.

Start and Close of Registration

The school will complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session within 30 minutes of the start of the lesson.

Registration begins at 8.50 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. each school day and registers will be closed 30 minutes after these times.

If a pupil arrives after the commencement of the registration period, they will report to reception to be entered into the late record book.

Pupils arriving after the register has closed, without an acceptable reason, will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session.

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.

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.

Montgomerie adheres to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service Guidance to Essex Schools on Leave of Absence effective from November 2016 with regards to attendance and Leave of Absence.

The Legal Status of Registers

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording pupils attendance or absence and in the latter case if authorised or unauthorised.

A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order in respect of a pupil.

Registers must be kept for a minimum of 3 years following completion at the end of the academic school year.

Staff responsible for processes

- The head teacher is responsible for attendance issues and will check the registers on a regular basis to identify any attendance/punctuality concerns.
- The administrative team are responsible for ensuring that registers are kept safely and are available for inspection to relevant professionals.
- The administrative team are responsible for logging attendance information onto the computerised system.
- The class teacher is responsible for taking the register daily, once for the AM session and once for the PM session.
- The class teacher is responsible for register maintenance of their own class register. Including the following: using the correct colour ink, black/red; ensuring each pupil is called by name when taking the register; ensuring that symbols used are appropriate; not using correction fluid; ensuring all mistakes are amended with the original information still clear and corrections clearly marked; ensuring the registers are neatly kept allowing for ease of reading at all times but especially in an emergency situation – i.e. during a fire procedure.

Montgomerie School will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.

Procedures for following up absence/lateness

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school in the morning of every day of the child's absence. If this contact is not made then Montgomerie School will contact the parent/carer by telephone. If this does not elicit an explanation of the absence and the absence continues, a letter will be sent.

If this letter does not elicit an explanation for the absence a second letter will be sent to the parent/carer, the school's Education Welfare Officer will be informed and the parent/carer will be invited in to the school for a meeting with the Head Teacher.

This meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.

If the pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, in exceptional circumstances there will be provision to allow the pupil to ease back into the school system. In the event of a pupil returning after a long term absence then an individual reintegration programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible.

Where a pupil is persistently late the parent/carer will be invited to a school-based meeting.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Absence for the following reasons could be authorised where parents have confirmed the absence in writing on the child's return to school (consideration whenever known, will be given to procedures where parents have difficulty with the written word, or where English is not the first language): •

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances i.e. bereavement
- If permission for absence has been granted in advance by the Head Teacher
- Transport arranged by the LA has failed to arrive where the pupil lives beyond statutory walking distance 6 After 3 days of sickness absence the parent/carer will be required to provide evidence. The following are examples of acceptable written evidence for sickness absence: Appointment cards/letters; Medical certificate; Letter from GP or a Prescription certificate.

If there is an extensive period of absence due to medical reasons the school or the Education Welfare Officer may ask for the permission of the parent/carer to contact the child's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the child from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the child.

Holidays During Term Time

Leave of absence will not be granted for holidays during term time unless there are extremely exceptional circumstances.

Any holidays taken during term time will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This will appear on the child's end of year report. The case could be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 28 days) to each parent/carer for each child taken out of school.

Strategies for promoting attendance/punctuality

In the belief that pupils are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is exciting, relevant and meets their needs the curriculum will be regularly reviewed.

Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices.

Expectations are made clear to parents with regard to attendance and punctuality in the home school agreement, school prospectus, parent consultation meetings, newsletters and the display of relevant policies on the school website.

Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters, parents' evenings and pupil reports will be used.

Parents, pupils and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.

Pupils with a known attendance problem being admitted to school will be interviewed with the parents and will be set targets for improvement.

Parents will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.

Pupils, who have been absent for an extended period of time, will be reintegrated back into school through a structured and individually tailored programme.

All issues, which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties, are to be promptly investigated by the school (please refer to anti-bullying policy, behaviour policy and equal opportunities policy).

Strategies for promoting attendance/punctuality

- Termly celebrations of children who have had a 100% attendance throughout the term
- Improved attendance celebrated for individual pupils
- The class with the best attendance is congratulated weekly in assembly and rewarded by their teacher with 5 minutes extra play
- The class with 100% attendance for the week receives a £10.00 voucher to spend as they wish

- A display in the hall shows the weekly attendance of each class
- Specific assemblies designed to promote good attendance held each term
- End of academic year letter sent to parents congratulating them on their child's attendance where attendance is 100%
- End of academic year pupils presented with a reward for achieving 100% attendance

Target Setting/Monitoring & Evaluation Mechanisms

- Targets set annually for attendance – these are regularly monitored with reports sent to Head Teacher half-termly.
- A late letter sent to parents after three lates within two weeks – if no improvement is made parents are requested to attend a meeting with the head teacher and a school governor with responsibility for attendance.

Evaluation and Review

The school will review this policy annually and update accordingly to include changes in the law and guidance on good practice. The policy will be promoted throughout the school community and shared with outside agencies and partners as required.

Our aim is for every child at Montgomerie Primary School to have outstanding attendance in order to benefit from an outstanding education.