

MAUNDENE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Reviewed policy:	November 2017
Policy to be reviewed again:	March 2019

1. Introduction

This policy operates in accordance with the framework and advice contained within the Medway guidance on achieving and maintaining high attendance, which the school, Headteacher and its Governing Body intend to follow.

- i. We expect all children at Maundene Primary School to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit enough to do so. We try to make our school a safe and happy place for the children to be in and reward those children whose attendance is very good. We know that absence hampers children's learning, so we discourage all unnecessary absences, including those taken for holidays in school time.
- ii. Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the Governing Body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

A child comes to school for 190 days a year. They spend just over 6 hours a day at school with 5 hours learning time.

The Government require children's attendance in school to be 96% and above. Ofsted inspectors say that 'Good' schools must be in line with Government guidelines. A school who has poor attendance will result in being graded lower. If a child has an attendance of 90% you may think this is 'good' but in fact, this child has missed the equivalent of 4 whole weeks of learning, which is 10% of overall learning lost.

Attendance during school year	Equates to days absence	Which is approximately	Which means number of lessons missed
94%	10 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

2. Purpose of the policy

- Sets out the ways by which attendance and punctuality are operated and managed by the school;
- Clarifies the role of the parents/carers

3. The School will:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority.
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive learning environment so that children feel safe, and know their presence is valued;
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality, using newsletters and other communications to parents.
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so they retain this into adult life.
- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education.
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored, using a computer based registration system, and absences are followed up promptly.

- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Traveller Education, Health, Social Services etc).
- Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised attendance.
- Ensure all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.
- Ensure information is available for Governors and parents.
- Ensure good liaison and communication is clear where changes occur.
- Develop incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- Share good practices with other schools.
- Have procedures in place to help children settle in after long absence.

4. Strategies to promote and maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality

- All new parents are introduced to the Policy and information on attendance in the school prospectus. It is also accessible on the school website.
- The newsletter is used as a vehicle to promote this aspect of school life and serves as a reminder.
- Individual parents are approached where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Maintain and promote a set of class rules which refer to punctuality and readiness for work.
- Reward classes, children and groups of children for high attendance.
- Maintain and update records within the SIMS system.
- Liaise with the AAP during regular monitoring visits to identify attendance concerns.

5. We expect the parents to:

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of addresses.
- Notify the school when their child is sick by providing details of the reason. If the sickness continues for over 3 days, medical evidence must be provided.
- Provide evidence from a medical professional when their child has reoccurring sickness or a medical ailment which requires them to take sporadic periods of absence from school i.e. Tonsillitis. We request this information if it reoccurs 3 or more times. Failure to provide evidence will result in a referral to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP).
- Telephone the school (01634 864721) after the first day of absence to advise the school if the absence is continuing.
- Provide medical evidence to the school for appointments before the arranged date indicating why absence will occur, unless an emergency situation has arisen, whereby providing evidence after is satisfactory.
- Ensure their child arrives to school on time each a day (in classroom by 8:45am).
- Inform the school if their child is going to be late e.g. if car breaks down or if an urgent appointment has been made.
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and to promote this to their child.

6. Absences

Overview

Responsibility to authorise absences rests with the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence may be categorised as unauthorised. It is important to note that not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Procedures for Unknown Absences

All absences are followed up daily. If the school office has not received information regarding a reason for a child's absence; a text or email is sent to the parents before 9:30am. If there is no response from the parent, this is followed up by an Unexplained Absence letter sent to the home address. Should this still result in no response, your child's absence will be marked as unauthorised.

Authorised Reasons

An absence is classified as authorised when a child is not in attendance for a legitimate reason deemed satisfactory by the school. It is important that parents liaise with the school giving a full explanation, providing as much notice and evidence where possible.

Illness will be authorised providing adequate details of the symptoms are provided by the parent or carer with as much notice as possible (see the section on 'Illness' for further details regarding persistent illnesses). Equally, if a child is sent home by the school for an illness this will be classed as authorised.

Repeated Unauthorised Absences

Should a child have a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the school will contact the parent or carer asking for more information. The parents or carers may be asked to meet with a member of Senior Leadership Team at the school to discuss supportive ways to help solve the problem. Should the situation not improve, the school will then contact the Attendance Advisory Service, who will visit the home and seek assurances that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

The Local Authority reserves the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Unauthorised Reasons

The following reasons will be classified as unauthorised:

- A family holiday because it is 'cheaper' to go in term time
- A child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home
- A child is absent due to family work patterns
- It is too far to travel to school or the parents cannot get the child to school
- It's the child or family members birthday
- The child is taken on a shopping trip or going out for a family treat

- The child is kept off because the parent is ill or has a medical appointment
- A child is absent because their sibling is ill or taken out of school to attend their siblings medical appointment
- Repeated illness without medical evidence or illness whereby the symptoms are not explained in full and deemed inadequate by the school

Illness

If a child has repeated incidents of illness (3 or more), parents will be issued with a letter from the school explaining that they are required from that point forward, to provide evidence from a medical professional for any further illness absences incurred. It is important to us at Maundene Primary that the children are fit, healthy and able to learn. Repetitive illness means missed education, which hinder a child from achieving their full potential. Failure to produce medical evidence will result in an unauthorised absence being given. Equally if a child is ill for more than 3 days, medical evidence will also be required otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (see section '**Repeated Unauthorised Absences**' for what procedures are followed in this case).

Acceptable forms of medical evidence are:

- A letter or note from the doctor
- An appointment card with your child's name on
- A photocopy of a prescription
- By showing the school office the medicine prescribed

We do understand that sometimes children are poorly with long term sickness with things such as chicken pox. However, over the counter medication is usually sought to help relieve symptoms. In cases such as this, please speak to your pharmacy or chemist who are able to provide you with a label for the medication they have recommended to you and show this to the school office as evidence.

Medical Appointments

Parents must provide evidence of medical appointments in advance where possible, however if not, this must be obtained whilst at the appointment and given to the school office upon the child's return. This evidence will authorise your child's absence. Failure to provide this will result in the child being given an unauthorised absence.

We ask that parents try to book medical appointments outside of school hours unless this is an emergency appointment.

Requests for Leave of Absence

Parents are asked to support Maundene Primary with not taking their children out of school during term time. It is also important to note that and there is no parental right to take a child out of school.

The Government directive states no annual holidays can be authorised by the school or Headteacher unless there are extenuating circumstances.

If a holiday is taken in term time, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a referral will be made to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP) for a consideration of a fixed penalty notice (fine). These penalty notices are issued per parent, per child. Currently £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days. If still not paid after 28 days, court action will be taken.

7. Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance

Attendance of all children is continuously monitored and we regularly liaise with parents about any concerns. Attendance checks occur on a regular basis and letters will be sent to parents with a child whose attendance is deemed unsatisfactory or lower than expected. Parents may be invited into school to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to look at ways in which we can support an improvement.

All children must access the appropriate classrooms in the mornings via the Key Stage 2 gate/playground. Parents must not drop or bring children to the school office unless the playground gate is closed. The playground gates close at 9am.

Lateness

Did you know... if a child arrives late for school 5 minutes every day for 5 days a week for the school year, they will miss the equivalent of 3 whole days learning a year!

It is the parent's legal responsibility to ensure that their child arrives at school on time, every day. The school day begins at 8:45am and the register is taken at 9am. Children arriving after 9:15am will be registered as an unauthorised lateness (U).

Parents of the children who are regularly and persistently arrive late will be approached and reminded of their obligation to comply and get their child to school punctually. The school may also send out a letter asking parents to give a full and comprehensive explanation of why their child is regularly late. If punctuality does not improve, parents may be invited into school to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to look at ways in which we can support an improvement.

Morning Lateness – Parents must inform the School Office on 01634 864721 with a reason for the lateness as soon as possible. Once on school premises, the parent must also escort the child to the school office and complete a late form, giving as much detail as possible.

After School Lateness - All parents must collect their child or children from the appropriate classrooms. Children cannot be collected from the school office unless a specific agreement has been made with the office staff. Any children not collected by 3:30pm via the classrooms will be escorted to the Key Stage 2 Hall. Parents are then requested to collect their children from there and sign them out.

If parents are aware they might be late collecting their child, they must inform the school office by 2:30pm. The child will then be taken to the Key Stage 2 Hall to be collected.

8. Rewards for Good Attendance

- i. All children who have 100% attendance in any term are congratulated and rewarded with a Headteachers certificate issued in assembly. They are also celebrated in the school newsletter.

- ii. Additionally, weekly recognition is given to the class with the best attendance. This is done by a member of that class, picking out at random from a bag a leisure activity which the whole class can enjoy e.g. 15 mins free class time.

9. Attendance Targets

- i. The school has attendance targets set by the Local Authority. Ofsted requires the school investigates the effects of absence on achievement when it has fallen, at school level, below 96% each year. Additionally, the AAP attached to the school, monitors the attendance of each individual child, when it falls below 96%.

10. Monitoring and Review

- i. It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor overall attendance. They request a termly report from the Head teacher. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The Governing Body will, therefore, examine closely information provided for them and seek to ensure that attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- ii. The school keeps accurate attendance records through a computerised registration system.
- iii. The rates of attendance are reported in the school prospectus and in the annual governors' report.

Signed.....

Name.....

Date.....