

MILLWOOD SCHOOL, BURY

POLICY: Attendance

DATE: January 2018

DATE ADOPTED BY GOVERNING BODY:

Millwood Primary Special School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We will work with families and other services to minimise the impact of our children's additional needs on their access to education.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Bury attendance targets. The school will seek advice from the School Attendance and Education Welfare Team when setting this target.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

School Procedures

Caroline Henley, DHT, is the lead person for attendance at Millwood and all issues relating to attendance should be brought to her attention as soon as they arise. If she is not available you should report your concerns to another member of the SMT.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on her behalf can authorise absence. At Millwood that designated person is Caroline Henley, DHT. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised. All absences that school have not been informed of beforehand will be followed up in the first instance by a phone call to the primary carer from a member of the office team.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8:50am. The registers will remain open for 20 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at

registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. The afternoon registration will be at 1:00 pm. The registers will close at 1:10 pm. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, a meeting with the Deputy Headteacher and the Education Welfare Officer will be arranged to discuss what support can be offered.

First Day Absence

If a child is absent, parents/carers should call the school on the first day stating the reason for the absence.

If no contact is made by parents/carers explaining the absence on the first day the school will try to phone to secure an explanation. Where the school is unable to make contact with the primary care giver the other emergency contacts listed for the child will be contacted. A home visit may be arranged if no contact can be made with any of the emergency contacts.

If no contact can be made with the parents/carers the Deputy Headteacher will inform the appropriate agency, this may be the School Attendance Team or the child's Social Worker.

If, after the child returns to school no explanation of absence is given by the parents/carers, the school will write again. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised after 4 weeks if no explanation can be obtained.

Regular register checks are carried out by the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). The Deputy Headteacher (DHT) meets fortnightly with the EWO to monitor attendance. Attendance of all pupils is monitored weekly. Attendance is monitored closely if it falls below 95%. If attendance falls below 93% parents may be contacted by the DHT and the case will be discussed with the EWO. The reasons for non attendance will be identified, support will be offered and if necessary parents will be invited to meet with the school and the EWO. The number of pupils in year 1 - 6 with attendance of 90% or below will be reported to the Local Authority at the end of every half term. The school has a Red (attendance below 85%), Amber (attendance between 85% and 95%), and Green (attendance above 95%) system of monitoring attendance and this is shared with the governing body each term.

Children and Young People in Care

The attendance of pupils in public care is monitored and reported on separately. Their absence is reported on daily to the Local Authority and reviewed at their Statutory Review and PEP meetings.

Persistent Absence (Defined in legislation as 10% or more absences)

Either authorised or unauthorised. A child who is persistently absent is at risk of failing to achieve their full potential within the school environment. As a special school many of our children have ongoing medical needs and where this means that they are unable to attend school for extended periods alternative strategies will be put in place to ensure access to education continues wherever possible. Alternative strategies include school staff supporting pupils at home or liaising with the hospital school and respite providers.

Onward referral to support services (School Attendance and Education Welfare Team etc)

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation will be discussed with the school's Link EWO. The schools link SAO visits the school on a fortnightly basis to address any attendance issues. The school will record details of the action that they have taken. Support from the School Attendance and Education Welfare Team is available if necessary in between the scheduled visits.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. Staff should report any concerns to the Deputy Headteacher.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s. If this is unsuccessful the school may refer to the School Nurse, if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the school's Link EWO. If the attendance problem is linked to other issues within the family setting the school will refer to our Child and Family Support Worker.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils. Where it is deemed necessary arrangements for a phased return to school will be made.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Promoting attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. Attendance rates are reported annually to parents during the summer term as part of children's end of year reports.

Holidays in term time

In September 2013 amendments to the Pupil Registration Regulations (England 2006) made it clear that Head teachers may no longer grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. At Millwood parents/carers are discouraged from arranging holidays or extended leave of absence during term time.

The school will only grant leave of absence for family holidays in **exceptional circumstances**. Taking a holiday during school term because it would be cheaper, better weather or tagging it on to the beginning or end of a school break is not in the DfE's (Department for Education) view considered to be exceptional circumstance.

The School Attendance and Education Welfare Team have provided clear guidance on Leave of Absence and Holiday in Term Time Guidance which the school follow.

Parents/carers must apply for permission to take their child out of school during term time in writing at least 2 weeks before the planned absence. This request must include a clear explanation as to why the leave could not be taken during the school holiday period. Careful consideration will be given into the circumstances outlined in the application and additional evidence may be requested.

If the request is denied school will inform the parent/carer of the reason by letter. If the parents/carers choose to continue with the planned holiday it will be taken as an **unauthorised absence**. A penalty notice will be issued after 5 consecutive days of unauthorised absence in these circumstances.

In the rare circumstance when the Headteacher is satisfied that there are genuine reasons for the holiday/extended leave in term time, she will agree up to 10 consecutive days in any one school year. This will be an authorised absence.

It is important to note that the new law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.

Penalty Notices

Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LA officers, Head teachers and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorized absences from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came in to force on 27th February 2004.

A Penalty Notice may be issued in the following circumstances:

- Overt Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Excessive holidays in term-time
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the Register has closed.)

Removal from School Roll

Pupils absent from school for unauthorised reasons are at risk of being taken off the school roll. Parents would need to reapply for a place at Millwood School from the SEN Team

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. Performance towards this target is monitored fortnightly by the Deputy Headteacher and reported to the Senior Management Team. A member of the school office team is responsible for monitoring and following up any absences in the registers each day and reporting this information to the DHT; and preparing the data for the governing body report. The Deputy Headteacher will compare school attendance data to national statistics for mainstream primary schools and other special schools on an annual basis and report this to the Head teacher and the Governing Body.

Our schools targets are:

Academic Year	Attendance Target	Actual Attendance
2008 – 2009	90.0%	90.33%
2009 - 2010	91.5%	92.19%
2010 – 2011	91.6%	91.68%
2011 – 2012	91.7%	93.7%
2012 – 2013	91.8%	92.4%
2013 – 2014	93%	93.4%

2014 – 2015	93.4%	93.15%
2015 – 2016	93.4%	93.2% 93.4% for Years 1-6
2016 – 2017	93.4%	93.1% 93.4% for Years 1-6
2017 - 2018	93.4%	

Related policies

This policy is related to the Children Missing in Education Policy. This policy is stored on the Millwood Shared drive.

Updated by Caroline Henley – 23.1.2018