



## Attendance Policy

### Introduction

The governors, head teacher and staff of Millfield Primary School are keen to ensure that all our children attend school regularly and punctually so that they receive the best education possible.

It is an established fact that children who develop poor patterns of attendance and punctuality at primary school tend to continue in this pattern throughout their school life and beyond. For this reason we as a school want to promote the view that regular attendance is vital to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our children.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by the parent.

### Aims

Our school has set itself the challenging target of 97% attendance across the academic year in order to ensure that all pupils are given the best chance to get the most from their education.

The aim of this policy is to ensure high levels of pupil attendance and improve levels of punctuality in order to raise achievement and enable pupils to maximise learning opportunities both in school and in later life.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parent and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, their absence should never be covered up nor should the school give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make the situation worse. This policy outlines the practise the school employs to achieve good attendance for all pupils.

### Reasons for absence

Parents and carers are asked to contact the school office by phone or in person if their child needs to be absent from school.

#### ***Authorised absences include:***

Sickness, hospital appointments, dentist, religious holidays, clinic and funerals. Medical appointments should be arranged if possible outside the school day. Where this is not possible it is expected that pupils only miss part of the day.

#### ***Unauthorised absences include:***

Shopping, visiting relatives, buying shoes, going for a haircut, birthday treats, etc.

## **Holidays**

*Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.*

### ***Term-time holiday***

*The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** currently allow head teachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Head teachers can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.*

*Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.*

**This legislation means that the school cannot grant any term time absence for holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

The following are examples of exceptional circumstance:

- *To allow a pupil to return to their country of origin for family, religious or cultural reasons.*
- *Unavoidable circumstances - for example the parent / carer has inflexible leave allocation and evidence of this is provided by the employer.*
- *There has been bereavement or serious illness in the family and a leave of absence is deemed appropriate.*
- *Leave of absence connected to children of service personnel.*

Absence from school can be requested through completion of a Leave of Absence form which is available in the school office.

**Parents and carers need to be aware that if their Leave of Absence request is not granted and they choose to keep their child off school this will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised and this may result in the local authority issuing a Penalty Notice or fine.**

**From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 any period of unauthorised absence (holiday) could result in a penalty notice fine being issued.**

### **Reporting absence**

Parents should notify our school that a child is absent and for what reason – this should be done by contacting the school on 01827 213825 before school commences on the day of the absence, alternatively an e-mail can be sent to:

general2@millfield.staffs.sch.uk

### **First day contact systems**

Where the school does not receive a message about child's absence from an adult with parental responsibility, the school will ring the parent to ascertain the reasons for absence

If the parent notifies the school of a child's reason for absence, but the child continues to be absent for more than three days then an update check will be made by the school in the form of a phone call.

### **Lateness**

The school gate is opened at 8.40am for children to come into school and make their way to classrooms. School starts at 8.50am. The school gate is shut at promptly after this. Lateness is classed as any child coming into school after the gate has been shut. All children arriving after the gate has closed must report to the office. After 9.20am it is classed as an unauthorised absence and is recorded as a U (late after registers have closed).

Lateness is monitored monthly. Where children have persistent lateness problems the head will invite the parents into school to a formal meeting.

**From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 persistent lateness of 10 unauthorised late marks (rather than 20 previously) could result in a Penalty Notice fine being issued.**

### **Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness**

From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 parents / carers may receive a penalty notice and potentially a fine if their child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve week period.

### **Concerns about poor attendance**

In cases where a pupil is frequently absent without good cause (or falls below 90%) the school will write to parents / carers expressing concerns. Following this if there is no improvement the school will request a meeting in order to discuss what can be done to improve the pupil's attendance.

It is hoped that following this contact parents / carers will work with the school to resolve the poor attendance issues together.

If difficulties cannot be resolved and there is no improvement in attendance the school may refer the child to the Local Support Team / Education Welfare Officer. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, the local authority / Local Support Team can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or issue penalty fines.

*Millfield Primary School, Coleshill Street, Fazeley, Tamworth, B78 3RQ*

*Head teacher: Mr S Kelly*

In these circumstances where all other interventions have failed, the school would support legal action and the issuing of penalty fines (£60 if paid within 21 days of fine being issued. If paid after 21 days but within 28 days fine is doubled to £120).

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

School registers are analysed on Friday and a print out of each class's attendance along with an analysis of absences is given to the Head teacher. This enables attendance to be monitored and absences checked.

The impact of attendance policy is evaluated by analysis of class and whole school attendance figures every half term.

### **Promoting and Encouraging Attendance**

The school employs a range of strategies to encourage good attendance:

To impress upon children the importance of good attendance there is a weekly good attendance award. The class which has the best attendance across the term then receives an award. The winner of each term's attendance award is published in the school newsletter and on the school web site.

During whole school assemblies, the children's attention may be drawn to particular circumstances where children could have had time off school but have still attended. Such children may be given a Star of the Week certificate or Head Teacher's Award to acknowledge this.

There are regular reminders to parents / carers about the importance of attendance and punctuality in the school newsletter and on the school web site.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school.

School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. We believe that regular attendance is crucial to the progress and achievement of our pupils.

Mr S Kelly - Policy updated January 2018

This policy will be reviewed annually

Reviewed: October 2018

Date of next review: October 2019