



# NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY and Procedures MORNINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Introduction

Mornington Primary School is committed to working with, and supporting, parents/carers and children to ensure that every child achieves the highest level of attendance at school which in turn will have a positive impact on the learning of each individual.

Aims;

- ✓ Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- ✓ Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and, act early to address patterns of absence.
- ✓ Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- ✓ All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.
- ✓ To work in close partnership with parents and carers
- ✓ To celebrate and value punctuality and good attendance

The school also committed to working in partnership with other agencies who can contribute to an holistic approach to improving school attendance and to ensure that all other relevant agencies are engaged in the support of particularly vulnerable children and groups, including children in public care and Traveller children.

## Duties and responsibilities of parents and carers

The partnership between home and school is key in ensuring that each pupil has the very best opportunities in school. Good attendance has a proven positive impact on attainment and progress. It is the duty of the parent of a child of compulsory school age to ensure that he or she receives the appropriate full-time education. The education should be suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs a child may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

**By accepting a place at Mornington Primary School parents agree to ensure that their child attends school for the maximum number of days possible. This includes pupils who are under 5 years old. This ensures that all children have equal access to all learning, developmental and educational opportunities within school.**

## Legal Requirements

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children receive full time education.

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

Legal action may be instigated against parents/carers in relevant circumstances using the wide range of available options including:

- penalty notices
- school attendance orders
- Section 444(1) and (1)(a) of the Education Act 2002

All of the above can be incorporated within a 'fast track to court' process.

## Duties and Responsibilities of Schools

The head teacher and governors are responsible for promoting an ethos of good attendance and punctuality throughout school. Effective systems and procedures are in place to monitor attendance and also to take action where attendance is a cause for concern.

Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised to do so by the Governing Body of the school.

At Mornington Primary School this person is the Head Teacher or Head of School.

### **Punctual and Regular Attendance**

Mornington Primary school works hard to promote the value of regular attendance with parents/carers and pupils.

This is achieved by;

- Letting parents know that regular and punctual attendance is something we value
- Ensuring that parents are clear about school starting and finishing times
- Being consistent and punctual as a school in observing starting and finishing times
- Rewarding good attendance e.g.
  - Rewarding any class that achieves 100% attendance within a week*
  - Gold Awards for pupils achieving 100% attendance in 3 terms in a year*
  - Silver Awards for pupils achieving 100% in 2 terms in a year*
  - Bronze Awards for pupils achieving 100% in 1 term in a year*
- Monitoring poor attendance and taking action as agreed by the governing body.
- Regular information about attendance is published in the school's newsletter
- Upon enrolling parents are issued with a booklet explaining the school policy on attendance and punctuality.
- Reporting on attendance in the annual school report

### **Recording and Monitoring**

Whole school attendance figures are reported termly and annually to the governing body. The attendance trends of the school and for vulnerable groups are monitored using the schools data base.

Individual pupil attendance is recorded and monitored weekly. Letters highlighting the level of concern are used to keep parents informed. These letters include ones of celebration when there is a positive result or improvement of attendance for the parents and pupil concerned. Where attendance remains a concern parents will be invited to attend a structured conversation meeting with the class teacher and head teacher in order to fully explore the difficulties and help create actions to improve the situation for the pupil. Where there is no improvement a referral may be made to the Targeted Support Service.

Information about all pupils' attendance is reported to parents in the summer term in the Annual Pupil Report. This is in the form of a percentage and the category of attendance.

<b>%</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b><u>Impact on learning</u></b>
<b>100%</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Best possible outcomes for the child.</b>
<b>97%+</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	Less than 6 days absence a year. Pupils with this attendance should achieve the best grades they can, leading to the best possible start in Secondary school.
<b>95%+</b>	<b>Good</b>	Less than 10 days absence. Pupils with this attendance are likely to achieve their target grades and will be well prepared for secondary school
<b>90%+</b>	<b>Poor</b>	19 days absence. Pupils are missing a month of school per year and may fall behind in Maths and Literacy; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.
<b>85%+</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	29 days absence. Pupils are missing 6 weeks of school, it will be difficult for them to keep up and achieve their best.
<b>Less than 85%</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>	Pupils are missing a day for every week of school. it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of pupils with this level of attendance could be issued with a penalty notice.

Records of lateness are monitored and actioned every half term. Where punctuality is an issue parents will be informed and asked to discuss the situation with the class teacher and or the Head teacher.

### **The School Day**

The school gates open at 8.40am. Children should make their way into school and be ready to learn by 8.50am, when the gates close. Any child arriving after the gates are closed must come into school via the main entrance and be signed into the building. Children entering the building through other doors run the risk of not appearing on the register, this poses a health and safety risk if school needs to be evacuated.

Children arriving between 8.55am and 9.15am will receive an 'L' mark in the register, this denotes 'late before registers close'. This will not affect your child's overall attendance percentage. However, this is still a cause for concern, and should your child arrive late to school 5 times within a 6-week rolling period this may result in a punctuality letter being sent home.

Children arriving after 9.15am will receive a 'U' mark in the register, this denotes 'late after registers close'. This is an unauthorised absence, which will affect your child's overall attendance percentage. If your child is too ill to attend school, you must notify the office via the My School App, telephone or email before 9.15am. After this time, the office will use the contact details we have on file to ascertain the child's whereabouts. School have a legal obligation to follow up absences and may still record the absence as unauthorised if we believe it to be the correct course of action

### **Attendance Registers**

School attendance registers are marked at the beginning of each session and distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absences.

Schools have a duty to inform the LA about pupils who have continuous absences of two weeks or more and pupils who fail to attend school regularly except where such absences are covered by a medical certificate or where they have been granted leave of absence.

The following codes are used by the school.

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm Present in school during registration. Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Code **B**: Off-site educational activity

Code **D**: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

Code **P**: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

Code **V**: Educational visit or trip

Code **C**: Other authorised circumstances

Code **E**: Excluded but no alternative provision made

Code **H**: Holiday authorised by the school

Code **I**: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

101 – Illness

102 – Confirmed case of COVID-19

Code **M**: Medical or dental appointments

Code **R**: Religious observance

Code **G**: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher

Code **N**: Reason for absence not yet provided

Code **T**: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Code **L**: Late arrival before the register has closed

Code **O**: Absent from school without authorisation

Code **U**: Arrived in school after registration closed

Code **X**: Not required to be in school

Code **Y**: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Code **#**: Planned whole or partial school closure

Code **Z**: Pupil not on admission register

COVID-19 additional codes

**X01** – Non-compulsory school age

**X02** – Self-isolating COVID symptoms

**X05** – Quarantine

**X06** – Shielding

**X07** – Government restrictions / lockdown

**X08** – Not attending in response to outbreak management

**X09** – Self-isolating close contact required to isolate by NHS Test and Trace

### **Authorised Absence**

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, school registers for pupils of compulsory school age, must distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absences. Regulation 7 gives the following reasons for treating a pupil's absence as authorised.

- because of sickness or some other unavoidable cause
- because of a day of religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong
- because the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home, ie. two miles for pupils under eight years of age and three miles for older pupils, and no suitable arrangements, eg: transport, have been made for him or her by the LA
- because of attendance at another school at which he or she is registered
- because he or she has been granted leave of absence.

this may be granted under the following categories:

- a. sporting activities
- b. music exams
- c. arts/theatre performances
- d. dance events
- e. Family events where the child's parents have no control over the setting of dates (eg a family member's wedding, international travel to family events)
- f. Serious family illness
- g. Long term illness
- h. Bereavement
- i. Days of Religious Observance - Section 199 of the Education Act 1993 permits absence for days of religious observance. This would normally apply to one-off absences for annual religious festivals. Absence for non-religious festivals such as the Chinese New Year is not permitted.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

Parents are asked to avoid arranging medical or similar appointments during school hours if at all possible. Where absence is for a medical appointment parents are asked to provide an appointment card or letter as proof.

Where parents wish to take their child away from school for a long period, the Head will discuss with the parents the impact such a break would have on the child's education. Parents may make an application for Leave of Absence using the relevant form from the office or the school website.

Parents should be aware that:

- Pupils may not be granted leave of absence to undertake employment except for work experience or to take part in a performance, licensed by the local authority.

- Holidays During Term Time

Parents cannot demand leave of absence for holiday purposes as of right. Parental requests for leave of absence for holidays should be made on the Leave of Absence at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed absence.

**As a result of recent legislation leave of absence for holidays will only be granted where there are extreme and exceptional circumstances.**

Response letters are forwarded to parents authorising or declining their request accompanied by relevant attendance data for the pupil in question.

- Other Request for Absence
- No reason given by parents for absence is classed as unauthorised absence.

## **FINES FOR ABSENCE**

Mornington Primary school believes that working with families to improve attendance is essential for the child. However there may be circumstances where the school will seek to issue a fine for unauthorised absences. Mornington will consider the individual circumstances of each case before recommending fines and is committed to pursuing a graduated response to improve attendance.

Where a child is absence during the week of statutory testing (Ks2 SATs) fines will be issued.

## **First Day Action**

Mornington Primary School requires parents to inform the office of the reason for absence on the first day. The involvement of parents/carers at this early stage can prove to be helpful and supportive. Where no information is received a phone call will be made by office staff to investigate the reason for absence and subsequently update school records.

## **Working with other Agencies**

Poor school attendance can be both a symptom of other difficulties faced by a pupil and their family, and a cause of other problems including exclusion and involvement in criminal activity. A coordinated approach on a multi-agency basis is required to support these children and families.

## **The Nottinghamshire County Council Targeted Support Service**

The Targeted Support Service will only take referrals for cases of persistent absence (85% or below) where:

- a significant proportion of the pupil's absence is unauthorised by the school.
- There is evidence that the parents/carers have been notified by the school about the concerns around their child's attendance and
- The schools can evidence that they have made reasonable efforts to meet with the parents to explore the underlying issues and identify and implement possible solutions.

The Local Authority through Targeted Support will prosecute cases of persistent absence where an individual case meets the criteria set out in the County Council Enforcement Policy and in the case of Penalty Notices, the Nottinghamshire Code of Conduct. Schools and services will try to engage with the parents to understand and address any underlying issues as an alternative to prosecution.

## **Referral**

On receiving a referral related specifically to attendance, Targeted Support will

- Allocate a Case Manager to the child/young person for whom the referral has been made.
- Issue or give serious consideration to issuing a Notice to Attend to the parents following an initial meeting with the family.
- Undertake an assessment of the young person to ascertain why their attendance is an issue. For young people at Level 3 in the Pathway to Provision the assessment will be the Family CAF.
- Share and explain a copy of the attendance register with the parent or carer
- Make it clear to the parent or carer both verbally and in writing that there is concern over the child's attendance and that the seriousness of the concern may lead to prosecution
- Include the parents/carers in the assessment,
- Develop and implement an action plan to address the issues impacting on the pupils attendance,
- Work with the school to explore any strategies for addressing the attendance issue. These might include addressing issues of bullying, offering mentoring, making temporary adaptations to the pupil's timetable or considering transport issues.

**Proceeding to Prosecution:**

Prosecutions will be undertaken in line with the County Council's Enforcement Policy. Prosecutions will be undertaken by a Senior Case Manager (Education Welfare) within Targeted Support to allow the designated Case Manager to continue to work with the child/young person and their family.

Policy reviewed : September 2021