

MARLFIELDS PRIMARY ACADEMY

Attendance Policy

Policy Author (s)	Mrs S Isherwood
Responsible Committee	Resources
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1 Introduction

Every child matters at Marfields. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all pupils to achieve their potential and aspire to excellence.

We believe that children can reach their full potential only by receiving full-time education, through regular and structured attendance. Marfields Primary Academy expects all pupils to arrive and leave school punctually every day the school is open unless they have an unavoidable reason to be absent. Arriving late can be embarrassing to the child and they may miss important parts of the curriculum.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Absence or late arrival also disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

All staff are concerned for the children's welfare and happiness and everyone plays a part in promoting regular attendance amongst the pupils. Good attendance is critical to good progress and attainment and this is underpinned by legislation.

Government research shows a direct link between attendance and attainment and good attenders also make better progress socially, learn to work with others, and are better prepared for the transition to secondary school and, eventually, higher education, training and employment.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Our attendance target this year is **95%**, but all pupils should strive to achieve 100% attendance if they can.

2 Responsibilities and roles

2.1 Families

Every parent/carer has a legal responsibility to make sure their child receives an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special education need they may have. It is also a legal duty of every parent/carer to ensure that their children attend school regularly if they are of compulsory school age and registered at a school.

This means that your child/ren **must** attend Marfields every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence **in advance** from the school.

Parents and carers must also ensure that school has up-to-date contact information for themselves and emergency contacts, preferably more than one.

If your child is going to be absent, parents must inform school either by phone on **01260 633120** and discuss with J. Yoxall or S. Isherwood, or e-mail to **admin@marfields.cheshire.sch.uk** as soon as possible and at the latest by 9.00 am on the first day of absence. Where possible, book any medical appointments around the school day.

2.2 Marfields Primary Academy

The **Principal** will:

- Foster a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the school community of teachers, parents and pupils by giving attendance a high profile.
- Provide a framework, with agreed roles and responsibilities for attendance matters
- Be responsible for ensuring the school conforms to statutory requirements regarding attendance.
- Develop positive and consistent communication between home and school and provide support and guidance for parents and pupils.
- Implement a system of rewards and sanctions with the aim of improving overall attendance of pupils at school and reducing unauthorised absence.
- With the senior leadership team, regularly identify and monitor pupil, class and whole school attendance and punctuality levels, particularly that of vulnerable groups and regularly communicate pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents.
- Work with children and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance, using parenting contracts where appropriate.
- Involve external agencies to support children and parents as appropriate to better understand and address the issues causing attendance concerns.
- Provide regular reports to the governing board on school attendance, including persistent absence and vulnerable groups.

The **staff with designated responsibilities** for attendance will:

- On the First day of absence, contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided and record this information accordingly. Contact emergency contacts if parents cannot be reached.
- Update attendance registers.
- Promote regular attendance through the school newsletter, website and displays and ensure the school's attendance policy is readily accessible.

All school staff will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and a safe learning environment.
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to poor attendance and punctuality.
- Adhere to the procedures in place within school to promote good attendance.
- Promote the link between attendance and educational attainment to pupils and parents/carers.
- Complete attendance registers in accordance with the legislation and under the direction of the Principal.
- Discuss attendance concerns at an early stage with children and parents.
- Raise any concerns about attendance with the Principal.

The Marfields Primary Academy Governors will:

- Ensure the school is in compliance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended.
- Agree an attendance policy and review it annually.
- Consider each request for leave against the school's criteria, decide whether some, all, or none of the leave will be authorised and ensure parents are notified of this decision.
- Agree targets for attendance at Marfields Primary Academy.
- Where the school is not meeting its attendance targets, or when the governors believe there is cause for concern, instigate a review of the school's attendance procedures in collaboration with the Principal and senior leaders.

Schools are bound by a range of attendance legislation and guidance; please see the appendix listing.

2.3 Cheshire East Council (the local authority)

Cheshire East support both parents and schools through the [Attendance and Children out of School](#) Team.

Marfields Primary Academy may refer parents/carers to the Attendance Team if unhappy with a child's attendance record. The Team will meet with parents, child and school to look at the reasons for the poor attendance and draw up a support plan. This may include bringing in other agencies, to make sure the child gets the right help.

The Cheshire East School Attendance Legal Team (SALT) may issue penalty notice letters and fines if the situation does not improve. They can also prosecute parents if they do not co-operate to help the child. Cheshire East can instigate Education supervision orders, School attendance orders, School absence penalty notice warning letters and School absence penalty notices (PCN) giving a fine and if necessary, take legal action.

3 Types of absence

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required from parents/carers. As a school, we will always work with parents (and other agencies, as appropriate) to understand the reasons underlying absence. The school will categorise the absence using a set of prescribed codes.

3.1 Authorised absences

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

3.2 Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. Please note that it is very unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. If a pupil continues to have unauthorised absences, the school may refer to the Cheshire East Attendance and Children out of School Team or request legal interventions from the School Attendance Legal Team. Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy during the school day.
- Absences which are not explained satisfactorily.
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed.
- Days off for shopping, birthdays or looking after other children.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed by the Principal.
- Days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the Principal.

It is the Principal's responsibility to decide if an absence is authorised or unauthorised and Governors responsibility to decide whether some, all, or none of the leave of absence for day trips and holidays will be authorised. Hence, if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, school may request further evidence from parents before an absence is authorised. This may be in the form of a prescription, appointment card or similar. Parents should not ask their doctor (GP) to provide "sick notes" to excuse absence. Using sickness to cover for holidays is not acceptable.

For any pupil at risk of becoming persistently absent, parents are expected to proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for other reasons. If your child is reluctant to attend school, it is better to speak to school as soon as possible to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. As a school, we will always work with parents (and external agencies as appropriate) to understand and address the reasons behind absence.

3.3 Persistent Absence (PA)

Persistent absence is when a child misses **10%** or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason, authorised and unauthorised (including illness, exclusion, holiday, etc). Absence at this level will damage any child's educational prospects and we expect parents' fullest support and co-operation to address this. Parents are expected to proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

At Marlfields Primary Academy, we monitor all absence thoroughly, therefore any pupil whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be prioritised and parents will be informed of this promptly. Pupils who are persistent

absentees are tracked and monitored carefully and the attendance procedures below (section 5) will be followed.

Parents are expected to work with the school and Cheshire East Attendance Team to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Parents are expected to proactively engage with the formal support offered, including any parenting contract or voluntary early help to prevent the need for legal intervention.

3.4 Leave during term time

By law, schools **cannot authorise any leave** in term time other than in exceptional circumstances. Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their education and progress as much as any other absence. If leave is being requested for a holiday or extended leave abroad, approval should be obtained from the Governing Board before making any bookings.

Leave of absence in term time **will not** be granted unless:

- a request for leave has been made **in advance** by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides (using the form available on the school website or from the school office), and
- the governors consider that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to the request.

Due to the need to evidence exceptional circumstances, parents are advised to provide school with any relevant information regarding their request at the point of application if they believe the circumstances are exceptional.

In considering the request school will also consider other factors such as:

- The timing of the requested leave, for example when a pupil is just starting at school or during assessment periods, such as SATs.
- A pupil's attendance record already includes unauthorised absence.
- Attendance is already a concern, or could become a concern, as a result of taking leave.
- Other periods of leave which the pupil may have had, either during the current or previous academic year.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised.

3.5 Religious absence

School will authorise the appropriate day(s) of absence per religious festival as set aside by the religious body of which the parent is a member and this will be marked as code R in the register.

Parents must request any additional leave **in advance** and this can only be authorised if the Principal agrees that exceptional circumstances apply.

3.6 Participation in sporting events

Parents can request leave of absence for their child to take part in regional, national and international sporting events. However, as always, granting leave is at the Principal's discretion. Discussions will also cover the length and frequency of the absence(s) requested and how learning will continue if absence occurs, for example the sports club or association providing an approved education tutor. Leave for a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school can be marked in the register as code P.

Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late in order to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Principal and is unlikely to be approved if it would occur regularly.

3.7 Participation in performances (e.g. theatre, television, modelling)

Parents of a child performer can request leave from school for their child to take part in a performance. A local authority licence must be obtained before a child can take part in a performance. Before a licence is granted, school will be consulted and the Principal must be satisfied that the leave will not have a negative effect on the child's education.

Where the licence specifies the dates that the child is to be away from school, the Principal should authorise those days. However, where the licence does not specify dates, it is at the discretion of the Principal to authorise the leave request. Any absence authorised for the child to take part in a performance will be recorded as code C.

Parents wishing to apply for a performance licence should go the Cheshire East [Child performance licences](#) webpage.

4 Registration

4.1 Attendance registration

All children must arrive at 8.50 am and be in the classroom for the start of the morning session at 9.00 am. The online morning registration is completed by each year teacher at 9.00 am in both Key stages. The Nursery registration is completed at 9.15 am for the morning session. Please note that nursery children collected late at the end of the morning session may also incur additional charges.

The afternoon registration is 1.00 pm for Key Stage 1 pupils and 1.10 pm for Key Stage 2 pupils.

4.2 Late arrival

Pupils who arrive after 9.00 am must go straight to the school office at the main entrance to sign in and give a reason for their lateness.

After the attendance register has been taken it remains open until 9.30am in the morning. A pupil will receive a late mark (Code L) between 9.00 am and 9.30 am.

Children who arrive after the register has closed and without a valid reason for being late (such as attending a dental or medical appointment) will be marked as code U, which is classed as an unauthorised absence but indicates that the pupil was physically present in school for part of the session.

Children arriving late to the afternoon session will be likewise recorded as Late or Unauthorised.

4.3 Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting important news and information for the day. Pupils arriving late also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

If your child is often late you will be asked to meet with the Principal and/or class teacher to discuss ways to improve punctuality, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Persistent lateness after the register has closed may result in further action, as outlined below, under section 5.

4.4 End of the School Day

The school day finishes at 3.20 pm. Collection will be prompt by 3.30 pm. For children not collected on time, the parent/carer will be phoned to find out when collection will occur and additional charges may be made for attendance at the after-school club. If booked into the after-school club, please collect by 6.00 pm at the latest.

5 School attendance procedures

5.1 First day of absence

If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, we will telephone you on the first day of absence to find out what the reason is and when your child is expected to return. If we are unable to contact you, we will approach your emergency contacts

and, if necessary, make a home visit. When absence is recorded as unexplained (Code N) in the attendance register, we will ensure that the correct code is input as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session.

5.2 Attendance concerns

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with us in resolving any attendance problems together; this is nearly always successful. The school will be regularly monitoring and analysing attendance patterns and trends. We will ensure that parents are regularly informed about their child's attendance and absence levels and will be clear about the time missed and the impact on their child's learning. Where a child has 5 Late records in a period, for example, the parent will be contacted to discuss any issues in arriving at school promptly.

However, if concerns persist, school will use the following procedures and interventions, as required, to support parents in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality.

- Telephone calls and/or letters to make parents aware of school's concern about their child's attendance.
- Invitation to meetings to discuss concerns with a senior member of staff or Principal.
- Use parenting contracts to identify barriers to regular attendance, ways to overcome these and agree targets for improvement.
- Use incentive and reward schemes for individual pupils, if appropriate.
- Request support from the Cheshire East Attendance Team.
- For unauthorised absences, request legal interventions by the local authority, such as prosecution or other attendance-related court orders.

5.3 Pupils with medical needs who have difficulty attending school

Marlfields Academy continues to provide as much education as the child's medical condition allows us to.

The School monitors attendance of those pupils who are absent from school because of short-term or chronic illness, and close links are maintained with parents. It is requested that each absence through illness is supported by medical evidence from the doctor giving appointment dates and times when medical advice has been sought.

Government guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (see appendix) emphasises the role of governing bodies in ensuring that pupils with medical conditions are able to fully access education in the same way as other pupils. A key element of this responsibility is reducing the amount of time missed by these pupils, whether their condition is short or long term.

School will work with parents and other relevant professionals to minimise absence for reasons of ill health. This may be in the form of specific support or resources used within school or by sourcing appropriate provision elsewhere.

When a pupil has been absent from school for an extended period, the Principal, the class teacher and other support services will work with the family to ensure that a smooth reintegration is achieved.

In the case of sickness, pupils should refrain from attending school for 48 hours after the last episode of sickness. A full list of illnesses is held in school with recommended times of absence for each illness.

5.4 Pupils refusing to attend school

At Marlfields Primary Academy, we believe that every child has a right to a full-time education, and we would not accept "school refusal" as a reason for non-attendance. In such cases, we will work with parents to identify the reasons why a child may be reluctant to attend school. We may request support from the Cheshire East Attendance Team and, with consent, make referrals to external partners as appropriate to try to ensure the correct support is secured for the child and the family.

6 Notifications school must submit to the local authority

6.1 Admissions

All schools must notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register and must provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply to pupils who are added to the admission register at the start of the school's youngest year unless the local authority also requests for such information to be provided

6.2 Leavers

All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided.

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the required information as laid out in the regulation and work with the School Attendance Team.

6.3 Pupils who fail to attend

All schools (including academies) must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

6.4 Children missing education (CME)

Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure they receive a full-time education.

If a pupil has stopped attending and her or his location is unknown, schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register. In such cases, school should undertake a home visit themselves, or request a home visit from the Attendance and Out of School Team.

Appendix 1: School attendance and the law

There are many pieces of legislation and government regulations and guidance that are relevant to school attendance and to children and their parents and carers. The list below relates to this policy but is not exhaustive.

Relevant legislation

[The Education Act 1996](#)

[The Children Act 1989](#)

[The Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)

[The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003](#)

[The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Sentencing Act 2020](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

[The Education \(Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

Relevant government guidance

[Working together to improve school attendance](#)

[Parental responsibility measures for attendance and behaviour](#)

[Children missing education](#)

[Keeping children safe in education](#)

[Working together to safeguard children](#)

[Elective home education](#)

[Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities](#)

[Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England](#)

[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#)

[Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#)

[Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges](#)

[Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying](#)