



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy prepared by	Mark Couper Barton Headteacher
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MAYFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL
MAYFIELD ROAD, OLDHAM, OL1 4LG

Overview

At Mayfield Primary School we are proud of our high attendance levels and aim to improve them still further. Our approach is that we 'Listen, understand, empathise and support – but we cannot tolerate' poor attendance and high rates of persistent absence.

Children need to be in school each day and arrive on time unless there is an exceptional reason for absence.

Studies have shown that poor attendance is linked to poor attainment. Therefore, every parent / carer should aim to ensure that their child achieves maximum attendance each academic year. Ensuring that children attend school every day is one of the most important things parents / carers can do to guarantee their children's success and it is vital that school and the child's family work closely together to ensure children's attendance is high. Together, we have to be ambitious for our children.

At Mayfield, we want all our children to enjoy learning and achieve their full potential. For that reason, we have the following attendance policy, which sets out our expectations and approach to improving attendance and reducing persistent absence.

Please note that 'Persistent Absence' is defined as 10% or more sessions missed.

Reporting Absences

All absences must be reported by 9.00am on the first day of absence.

If we do not receive contact from parents / carers, we will attempt to make contact via the school texting system and / or telephone. However, the absence may still be recorded as unauthorised if parents / carers fail to contact us.

If we are unable to make contact by telephone, a member of staff may follow up with a home visit as part of our Safeguarding procedures. This may involve a note being dropped off through the door where required, asking parents / carers to contact us.

All absences without a legitimate reason will be marked as unauthorised on a child's attendance record.

Punctuality

Good punctuality is essential for children's progress. Pupils who are late for school miss important instructions / activities at the start of the day which can lead to lost learning opportunities. Persistent lateness will lead to parents / carers being contacted by a member of school's Pastoral Team to discuss how the situation can be improved.

Gates to the school grounds open at 8.30am, so that parents / carers can be on site ready for classroom doors to be opened at 8.45am, which is the official start time of the school day. External classroom doors are locked at 8.50am and gates to the school grounds are locked at 9.00am. The register is taken at 8.50am, so that learning can start promptly. Parents / carers of children arriving late are required to sign in at the school office and children will receive a late mark. Parents / carers are asked to record the reason for lateness in a book at the main office. Members of our pastoral team will also monitor late arrivals at the main entrance and speak to families directly when dropping off children. Children arriving after 9.15am will receive an unauthorised mark for the morning session.

Appointments

School requests that where possible, medical appointments for children are made outside of school hours. However, we understand that this is sometimes difficult, on these occasions please provide school with a medical card or letter. Where possible, school expects children to come to school before and / or after an appointment if they are able to do so. In the vast majority of cases we would not expect children to stay at home for the full day when they have an appointment. Where we suspect this is the case, a member of our Pastoral Team will make contact and parents / carers will be encouraged to bring their child into school.

Holidays in term times

Holidays in term time will not be authorised. They will always be recorded as 'unauthorised' absences. In very extreme, exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher may authorise an absence in term time, although this will not be for holidays.

Any unauthorised holiday of 10 school sessions or more (i.e. 5 school days) will be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of a penalty notice. Prior to booking any holidays during term time, applications in writing must be made to the Headteacher, Mr Couper-Barton.

There must be a minimum of 6 weeks' notice given by the parent/carer. Request forms are obtainable at the school office, along with leaflets on the impact and possible consequence of taking a child out of school during term time.

Religious Observance

Requests for absence related to religious observance should be made in writing, in advance, to the Headteacher. Such requests will only be granted where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents/carers belong.

Working with parents / carers

If we have concerns about a child's attendance at school, a member of our Pastoral Team will:

- Contact the parents / carer to discuss strategies to improve attendance and to offer support where appropriate.
- Parents / carers may be invited to attend a meeting with a member of the Pastoral Team to discuss the situation.
- This will lead to the development of a bespoke attendance improvement plan which will be agreed and confirmed in writing.
- School and parents / carers will work together to complete the plan, addressing the actions identified, in order to make necessary improvements.
- If necessary, school may seek the support / guidance of the Local Authority Attendance Team and / or make referrals to external agencies where there are specific concerns around attendance and / or persistent absence, and absence is becoming a safeguarding concern.

Triggers and escalation

School has mapped out the following to detail the key actions when absence drops below a particular point.

Best chance of academic success	100%	0 days	0 lessons missed	School will continue to celebrate attendance within school and within newsletters, for example.
	99%	1 day	5 lessons missed	
	98%	3 days	15 lessons missed	
Risk of underachievement	97%	1 week	25 lessons missed	A text will be issued to parents / carers to simply notify you that 97% has been triggered. At this stage, this is about 'information sharing' to make parents / carers aware.
	96%	1.5 weeks	37.5 sessions missed	
	95%			An e-mail will be issued to parents / carers to inform you that 95% has been triggered. Our e-mail will share our concerns and outline that we are looking for improvement to be made. (This will come from our Pastoral Team and Key Stage lead)
Serious risk of underachievement	94%	2 weeks	50 lessons missed	A telephone conversation will take place between parents / carers and a member of our Pastoral Team, to establish reasons for significant absence and how absence will be addressed. We will make clear that at this point we are becoming concerned.
	93%	2.5 weeks	62.5 lessons missed	
Severe risk of underachievement	92%	3 weeks	75 lessons missed	A formal meeting will take place in school between home and school to discuss attendance issues and / or concerns and we will jointly put plans in place to address attendance. Parents / carers will be informed at this stage of the risk of moving on to a formal persistent absence plan if attendance drops below 90%
	91%			
	90%	3.5 weeks	82.5 lessons missed	
Extreme risk of underachievement – persistent absentee	0-89.9%	3.5 weeks +	82.5 + lessons missed	A formal persistent absent plan is in place with agreed targets between home and school detailing how attendance will be improved. If persistent absence continues, school will refer to the Local Authority attendance team. This may lead to formal Local Authority involvement, which may lead to fines.

Penalty Notices and Fines

If school staff continue to have concerns about a child's attendance, staff may request that a Penalty Notice is issued to a parent / carer. This will only be used when parents / carers have been informed of our concerns and offered support, but do not work with us and / or show continued and sustained improvement, despite formal Attendance plans being in place.

Penalty Notices will be requested for the following reasons:

- 1). Persistent late arrival at school after 9.15am.
- 2). Unauthorised absences when no reasons have been provided by the parent / carer.
- 3). Unauthorised holidays during term time.

Encouraging excellent attendance

The issue of Attendance maintains a high profile within Mayfield Primary School at all times.

Examples include:

Weekly class attendance and punctuality statistics are published in the school newsletter for parents / carers and displayed in the school reception area and school corridor for children, parents / carers and visitors to see. Attendance and Punctuality is also shared on social media using school's Twitter account.

Each week the classes with the best Attendance and Punctuality are awarded Attendance and Punctuality trophies as part of weekly Celebration Assemblies. These trophies are prominently displayed within the classroom to keep attendance in the minds of our children.

Each term those pupils who have achieved 100% attendance are awarded a special and highly prized attendance badge to wear at both home and at school. A Gold, Silver and Bronze badge can be achieved. Consideration will be made for children who have long term health conditions to ensure they are treated fairly.

- One term 100% attendance = Bronze badge
- Two terms 100% attendance = Silver Badge
- Full academic year 100% attendance = Gold Badge

99% certificates are also presented to children as recognition of this achievement.

The impact of COVID

School recognises the challenges children and families have faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and the disruption to education. Children and families have been required to isolate at various points and show caution in keeping themselves and others safe.

There are times children have not been able to come into school and things have been done very differently, for example remote learning or when key workers and vulnerable children were only able to access provision.

We appreciate anxieties and the challenges faced, although we must stress that we are now in a position where we have to make a collective effort to get all of our children back into school, unless there are specific exceptions.

As a school community, it may be that we need to think differently and do things differently once again, and recognise that the restrictions previously imposed are not quite the same currently. Fundamentally, we are now in a position where all children are expected to be in school.

At the time of updating this policy, clear guidance has been issued to schools by Ofsted, that clearly map out expectations around children's Attendance at school. It makes the point that schools should 'Listen, understand, empathise and support – but not tolerate' poor attendance or high rates of persistent absence.

At Mayfield, we will follow the approach set out in this policy to work closely with children and families to make necessary improvements.

We will listen where we need to listen, for example where there are concerns or worries.

We will try to understand the specific challenges some children and families may face.

We will empathise and support where children and families may require some additional support, help or advice.

However, with the support will need to come challenge, and where required, families will be challenged where there is the need for improvements to be made. Where there needs to be open and honest conversations, we will have open and honest conversations. Where we need to ask questions around reasons for absence, will ask those questions. Where we need to set out actions that need to happen, we will set out actions that need to happen and communicate .

Our children, and their learning, are so important and the only way we can get that right is if they are in school each day.