



Mid-Trent Multi Academy Trust

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Principles:

- Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.
- Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole Mid-Trent Multi Academy Trust (hereafter referred to as the 'Trust').
- This policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the well-being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying and support for children with medical needs.
- All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

School Responsibilities:

- At schools within the Trust positive behaviour and attendance will be promoted through use of curriculum and learning materials and good attendance will be rewarded appropriately.
- Schools within the Trust will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the schools such as the school nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Workers - where required - in order that all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. The 'Early Help Assessment' process will be utilised to support this.
- Trust schools will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.

Responsibilities of Parents / Carers:

Parents /carers:

- have a legal duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends school regularly.
- must inform their child's school straight away if their child cannot attend and give the reason.
- must make every effort to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day.
- must ensure their child's school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their child's attendance.
- should encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep.
- should talk to their child about school and let school know if their child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- must ensure holidays are not booked in term time – **these will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.**
- should seek advice from their G.P. if they are unsure how long their child will be off school with an illness.
- must ensure their child's school has up-to-date contact details.

- should encourage their child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

N.B. Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact their child’s school at an early stage and work together with the staff to resolve any problems. This is usually successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Service at the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support. If other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance have failed, these officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child.

Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the EWW themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:

Attendance 100%	95%	90%	85%
Perfect, your child has every chance to succeed.	Very good but your child has missed 10 school days over a year.	Worrying, your child has missed 19 school days over a year. Your child will struggle to keep up.	Poor, your child has missed 29 days over a year. Legal action may be considered.

Every session in school is important if your child is going to succeed and not fall behind. At primary school level, pupils missing just 14 days of school a year in Key Stage 2 are a quarter less likely to achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths tests, than those children with no absence.

Admissions Register:

Trust schools keep admission registers which record the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of any previous school/s.

All schools and academies **must** keep a record of attendance register entries for at least three years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where s/he:

- has been taken out of school by his/her parents and is being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- has ceased to attend school and no longer lives within reasonable distance of the school at which s/he is registered;

- has a medical condition certified by the local authority school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- is in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period;
- has been permanently excluded.

Elective Home Education:

If Trust schools receive written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child, the Local Authority via Entrust at enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk will be informed of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst Trust schools will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will it seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

Definition of persistent absence:

Persistent absentees are defined as those pupils missing around 10% or more of the typical amount of possible sessions across a given period.

Referral to Education Welfare Service:

When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 90% without good reason, a referral to the EWS will be made by Trust schools. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice (see below) or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

Penalty Notices:

1. In certain cases of unauthorised absence, Trust schools may authorise Staffordshire Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. (See the Local Authority Code of Conduct Protocol for the issuing of Penalty Notices – last revised in September 2017.)**
2. Parents are regularly informed of the Local Authority Code of Conduct re Fixed Penalty Notices.
3. Information on the stance of the Trust and its schools with regard to unauthorised absence and Fixed Penalty Notices is available on the websites of individual Trust schools.
4. Parents will be notified individually by Trust school headteachers with regard to actions taken in the case of unauthorised absences.
5. In the case of persistent absence, it is emphasised that wherever possible, action will be taken by the school to improve a pupil's attendance and investigate and address any underlying cause of problems before making a referral to the Local Authority.

School Specific Procedures: See Appendix

****Details of Local Authority Code of Conduct Protocol (Sept 2017 to take effect Jan 2018):**

1. Unauthorised Leave of Absence (e.g. For Holiday During Term-time)

Where a request for leave of absence is made by a parent and subsequently taken after it has not been approved by the headteacher, the absence then becomes unauthorised. Referrals to the Local Authority will be made by the Trust school headteacher with regard to issuing of a penalty notice. **From 1st January 2018 any period of unauthorised leave may result in a parent receiving a penalty notice fine.**

If a parent hasn't requested leave of absence and then subsequently takes their child off school anyway (e.g. on holiday) this will automatically count as an unauthorised absence.

2. Illness

Absences due to illness must be supported by medical evidence if a child's attendance falls below 90%; parents will be notified in a separate letter from Trust school headteachers where a child's attendance has fallen below this figure. Medical evidence does not need to be a doctor's note; it could be an appointment card or sight of a prescribed medicine. If such medical evidence is not provided by a parent by the time the child has returned to school, the absence will be deemed to be unauthorised and automatically recorded on the register as such.

3. Punctuality and Penalty for Persistent Lateness

From 1st January 2018 where there are more than **10** occurrences of lateness after the register has closed, Trust schools will refer the matter to the Local Authority who may wish to issue a penalty notice. Late marks do not have to be consecutive in order for the penalty notice to be issued.

4. Period of Time used to Measure Persistent Absence and Lateness

If a child has had 10 days of unauthorised (persistent) absence – as opposed to **1**) above unauthorised leave of absence – or is late 10 times over a 12-week period parents may receive a penalty warning notice and also, potentially, a fine.

In all cases whether for lack of punctuality; medical reasons where a child's attendance has already fallen below 90% or a request for leave of absence, parents will be informed by letter from Trust school headteachers if any of the conditions are met that will result in a referral being made to the Local Authority. Parents will then be made aware of what they need to do to satisfy the authority's requirements. This is in line with Staffordshire County Council's new and revised Code of Conduct.

For information, the Penalty Notice fine currently stands at:

- £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £120 per parent, per child, if paid between 21-28 days.
- If the fine is not paid within 28 days, prosecution under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996 may occur.

If prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is £1,000 per parent, per child. This reflects the seriousness that the Government takes of unauthorised absence from school.

If a child continues to be absent after receiving a penalty notice fine for persistent non-attendance in a year, the Local Authority will then consider returning to court for further action under section 444(1) or 444(1a) which can then carry a fine of up to £2500, 3 months' imprisonment or a supervision order.

Summary:

Trust schools have a legal duty to publish their absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. Trust school staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Legal Framework:

- The Education Act 1996 ;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011 and 2013
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;
- The Education Act 2002; and The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011. ;
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;
- The Education Act 2005;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments;
- The Education and Skills Act 2008;
- The Equality Act 2010;
- The Supreme Court Judgement (2017) on The Isle of Wight v Platt case.

Appendix

School Specific Procedures:

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

St Peter's CE Primary School

1. If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact the school on the *first* day of absence, in person or by phone before 9:30am to explain the reason for the absence.
2. If the school office has not been notified of the reason for absence by 9:30am a school administrator will attempt to contact the parent to ascertain this.
3. Information detailing the cause of each absence is required in writing on the child's return to school; a short note will suffice and the school has a template for those parents unable or unwilling to compose their own letter. **Absence may not be authorised without this process.**
4. Leave would usually be granted for medical appointments which must be in school time, provided a written explanation is received.
5. The school will not authorise absence for trivial reasons such as shopping; looking after other children; haircuts etc.
6. **Punctuality:** Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration. Arriving more than 15 minutes after the start of the session without satisfactory reason may be counted as unauthorised absence. Parents of children who are persistently late within the registration period without a reasonable explanation will be contacted by the school and may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. (As above.)
7. **Holidays and Requests for Leave of Absence:** 2013 amendments to the 2006 Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the previous statutory threshold of up to ten school days' leave in one year being permissible. The 2013 amendments state that the headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term-time unless there are "exceptional circumstances". If the parent/carer feels that there are such circumstances which warrant their child's absence from school they should complete a request for leave of absence form available from the school office, clearly stating the exceptional circumstances. Each request will be addressed on an individual basis by the headteacher in conjunction with members of the school's Local Governing Body if necessary. The headteacher will notify the parent of his/her decision as quickly as possible. If the leave is granted the headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school. If the leave is not granted by the headteacher and it is taken anyway, it will be deemed unauthorised absence.
8. Leave will not be granted in any circumstances for Year 6 pupils during the annual period of Key Stage 2 SATs tests. (Parents are reminded of this regularly and individually at the beginning of Year 6.)
9. **Medical Evidence:** If a pupil's attendance level falls below 90%, without good reason, parents will be asked to provide medical evidence for the absence; this could be an appointment card stamped with the date of the appointment and the name of the medical practice.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

1. Mrs. J. Alexander – Headteacher
2. Ms S. Rowe – School Administrator

Colwich CE Primary School

As applicable

St Andrew's CE Primary School

As applicable

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by Trust staff (as applicable); representatives of Trust schools' Local Governing Bodies and approved by the Board of the Mid-Trent MAT.

Signed: _____ (Local Headteacher)

Signed: _____ (Representative of the Mid-Trent MAT)

Date of latest policy review: 5th December 2019

Date of next review: Autumn 2021