



Myton Park Primary School

Attendance Policy

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<i>By:</i>	<i>Elisabeth Lee Head Teacher</i>
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Myton Park Primary School Attendance Policy

Statement of Intent

We believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Staff, pupils and parents need to work together to enable this to happen. Any problems hindering full attendance need to be identified and acted upon as quickly as possible. The aim of the school is to facilitate their pupil's regular and sustained attendance at school, thus enabling them to achieve their full academic potential.

Children with 95% attendance or above make far better progress than those who have attendance at less than 90%

School Attendance – The Statutory Framework

Education Act 1944 – Establishes the duty of parents to ensure regular attendance of pupils.
Education Act 1996 – Establishes the duty of Local Authorities to enforce school attendance (Section 444).

Pupil's Registration Regulations 1986 – Establishes the criteria for the maintenance of Attendance Registers.

Pupil Registration Regulations – New absence codes

The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991

Framework for the Inspection of Schools (OFSTED) – August 1993

Education and Inspection Act 2006

The Children Act 2004

The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003

Definitions

Authorised absence – means that school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away from school, or has accepted an explanation offered as a justification for absence. Only the Head teacher can authorise absence from school. Parents do not have this authority.

Unauthorised absence – is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or pupils are taken out of school for holidays that are not authorised.

Persistent absence – the government categorises any pupil with 90% attendance or less as a persistent absentee.

What does this mean in terms of days missed?

 Attendance of **95%** for the year equals **10 days** that your child has been absent, that is **2 full school weeks** of your child's learning missed for that year.

 Attendance of **90%** for the year equals **19 days** that your child has been absent, that is **almost 4 school weeks** missed.

 Attendance of **85%** for the year equals **29 days** that your child has been absent per, that is **almost 6 school weeks** missed.

 Attendance of **80%** for the year equals **38 days** absent per year that is **over 7 school weeks** missed.

Registration

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon sessions, pupils are marked present or absent. The Education (Pupil Attendance Record) Regulations 1991 introduced a further requirement that attendance registers must show whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised.

Electronic registers will be used from September 2016 and Stockton Borough Council requires all teachers to use the symbols shown in Table 1 for the marking of registers.

It is school policy that registers are completed by 9.15am and 1.15pm for Key Stage 1 and 1.30pm for Key Stage 2. It is our policy to record a late mark for children who arrive at school after class registration has taken place and also if they enter via the main door when the pupil door is still open.

For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line must be taken on late arrivals. To do otherwise undermines the whole purpose of registration and may serve to encourage other pupils to arrive late. Particular attention will be paid to emerging patterns of late arrival.

We believe that pupils arriving late seriously disrupt their work and that of others. Our policy is to encourage punctuality. Five minutes will be allocated for registration purposes at the beginning of each session. Children will be recorded as being late once registration has taken place.

For children who are regularly late – we will initiate a beat the bell session and the head teacher or a designated member of staff will undertake to discuss issues with the parents/carers and the child/ren involved ensuring they all fully understand the need for punctuality.

Our registration procedure and guidelines for improving punctuality is included in Appendix 1.

Absence

It is the parent's responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence. Parents should contact school before 9.00am where possible, but before 9:30 to advise school of a pupil absence, giving the reason and expected length of absence. Parent/carers should contact school on each subsequent day of absence until the pupil returns to school. Where no reason of absence is provided, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

If a pupil is absent and school have not been able to make contact with parent to establish a reason for absence, then a home visit will be made by a member of staff on the 3rd day of absence to safeguard the wellbeing of the child.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can authorise absence, not parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remain about the explanation offered – or where no explanation is forthcoming at all the absence must be treated as unauthorised. Where parentally condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem in relation to a particular pupil, school will involve the Attendance Officer at an early opportunity.

- An excessive amount of authorised absence can seriously disrupt continuity of learning and encourage disaffection. We will be alert to emerging patterns of authorised absence.*

- We may authorise absence retrospectively where we are satisfied as to the explanation offered.
- Absences of pupils of compulsory school age without valid reason or for which no explanation has been provided will be treated as unauthorised.

If school is satisfied that a pupil is absent as a result of illness, then this absence will be treated as authorised. Following separate absences of illness, school will request parents to supply evidence of medical consultation to school (appointment card, copy of prescription, medication) before authorising the absence as illness.

Where we have reason to doubt the validity of an explanation offered in respect of a particular absence, further information will be requested by the teacher from the child's parents. If the school continues to be dissatisfied then the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Where there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness or illness absence is impacting on a pupils learning, school or the Attendance Officer can refer the matter to the School Health Service to arrange a special medical, or to make a contact with the pupil's GP. If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period or the school notices a pattern emerging, early contact will be made with the Attendance Officer and/or the School Health Service.

Leave for medical or dental appointments at a hospital will be given (i.e. the absence will be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parent (either in person, in writing or by a telephone call) or on production of an appointment card.

We strongly encourage general appointments to be made out of school time.

If staff become concerned that persistence absence or lateness is as result of the family experiencing difficulties, then, where appropriate, an Early Help Assessment may be made to explore what support, if any, may be relevant to the family.

Reporting of Absence Procedure

Parents/carers are expected to telephone school by 9.00am where possible, but before 9:30, see the class teacher, speak to the Teaching Assistant on the entrance door, send in a note or call into the office to report an absence on the same day. This will allow the teacher to interpret the category of absence. If they do not report the absence by 10.00am, then school will contact the parents to discover the cause of the absence. If the family is not on the telephone, the letter Appendix 3 may be sent.

Where there are concerns around attendance, parents will be alerted by letter and invited to discuss the issue with the head teacher if this is deemed necessary.

All notes, telephone messages and a note of verbal explanations will be recorded on the electronic register.

We believe that pupils need to attend school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. We do understand that in exceptional circumstances there are times when a parent/carer may legitimately request leave of absence. Parents are strongly urged to avoid taking family holidays during term time due to the disruption and impact of the missed education on the child.

Parents should complete a leave of absence for family holiday form which they may obtain from the school office, if they intend to remove their child from school for this purpose. It should be completed and returned to the school office before the holiday, giving appropriate notice to allow the request to be considered.

We do not sanction requests for absence due to family holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Holidays during the SAT's period in May, and the phonics testing

in June, will be discouraged as the school views the statutory and non-statutory assessments as a crucial part of every child's education.

Penalty Notices

The government advises that head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant leave. Supporting documentation/information must be provided to the head teacher to consider where parent/carers feel there are exceptional circumstances.

Where the leave of absence is not granted but children are still taken out of school, the absence is unauthorised (attendance code 'G'). If a parent does not apply for a leave of absence in advance the absence must be marked as unauthorised.

If a child misses 11 consecutive sessions due to a family holiday, that has not been authorised, then school will make a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team for a Penalty Notice to be issued to parents. The fine will be £60 per parent and per child. If a parent does not pay the penalty notice, then the LA will take them to court for non-payment. Charges are noted below;

- A Penalty Notice requiring the payment of a penalty of up to **£120**, failure to pay the penalty due will result in prosecution before Teesside Magistrates Court.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to **£1,000**.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to **£2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment**.

Where a pupil is present for registration but then has to attend an appointment, the school need take no action beyond recording the fact that (for the purpose of emergency evacuation) the pupil, although registered, is not physically present. Similarly the school must note the presence of a pupil (again for purposes of emergency evacuation) who was not there when the register was being taken but returns later from an appointment. The school administrator will keep a note of the times the child came or left so that there is information of the child's whereabouts in the event of emergency evacuation.

Categorising Absence

Our policy deals in general with the categories of absence and cannot cover every eventuality. It will be necessary on occasion to exercise reasonable discretion when investigating some absences.

Some key points:-

- Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to attend school or their educational provision during school hours;
- Whilst it is right that schools should recognise that individual pupils and families have problems, the aim should always be to expect regular attendance;
- Lateness should be actively discouraged;
- Where a pupil is absent without prior authorisation an explanation is required. If parents are not forthcoming (for whatever reason) it must be treated as unauthorised and the register recorded accordingly;
- Schools are not obliged to accept parental notes where there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered;
- Parents should not expect, or be led to expect, that, as of right, schools will agree to family holidays during term time.

- Even where absence is authorised, schools should be alert to emerging patterns of absence, which may seriously disrupt continuity of learning;
- In promoting regular attendance, schools should work closely with the Attendance Service

Lateness

It is Myton Park Primary School's policy to actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. In recognition of local circumstances (such as bad weather or occasional public transport difficulties), we may keep registers open for a reasonable period.

Where a pupil does arrive late and misses registration, his or her presence on site will still need to be noted for purposes of emergency evacuation. Anyone arriving late must report to the school office providing a reason for absence. Office staff will enter the relevant details in the comments box in the electronic register. Any pupil arriving after the register has closed will be marked as 'U' unauthorised late (unauthorised absence).

In responding to lateness, we will of course need to take account of the individual circumstances of each case. In some instance enquiries may reveal that the late arrival stems from difficulties at home or genuinely unavoidable circumstances. Teachers of pupils who persistently fail to arrive on time with valid reason, need to seek an early meeting with parents. If the parents do not have a valid reason for the child's persistent lateness then he/she should consult with the Head Teacher.

School Attendance Procedures

Myton Park monitors attendance each half term, class by class, and notes those with attendance rates of 95%, 90 – 95% and less than 90%.

Where school has concerns around the attendance of a child, class teachers will speak with parents, and where necessary, a meeting will be arranged with the Head Teacher.

How school monitors attendance – how attendance is monitored (whole school/class/individual).

Children who have managed full attendance within each half term, will be given a certificate acknowledging their good attendance.

Those who have managed 100% attendance since September, will be given a certificate at the end of each half term acknowledging their full attendance.

This way, each child should be able to attain several certificates through the year.

School intervention to address attendance concerns will be to;

-  Send a registration certificate at the end of each half term showing current attendance rates.
-  send letter to parent,
-  discussion with class teacher,
-  attendance meeting in school. Support offered prior to referral to Local Authority Attendance Team (this is mentioned in the Appendix)

Referral to the Attendance Service

The Local Authority Attendance officer makes regular visits to school to complete register checks and discuss with school pupils who have attendance below 90%. Referral to the Attendance-Service will be made in the following circumstances:-

- Attendance Procedures – pupil is having regular unauthorised absence from school
- Penalty Notice – where a pupil has had 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence within a six week period.
- Child Missing Education – where a pupil has left the area but does not have a destination school.

Reviewed Autumn Term 19

Next review Date: Autumn Term 2021

APPENDIX 1 REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

1. *Registration will be completed as quickly as convenient, preceding both daily sessions. Only ten minutes of the school day have been allocated for the registration procedure.*
2. *Children present will be so marked by a diagonal line*
3. *Children not present will be so marked by the letter N*
4. *Children arriving at school after registration in the morning must report to the school office.*
5. *Once we receive a valid reason for an absence, we can authorise that absence by inserting a letter. Reporting by telephone, verbally to a member of staff or by a note are acceptable. A list of symbols used for demarcating AUTHORISED absence is included in Appendix 12. Only school can authorise an absence. If an absence does not fit one of the categories listed, it is likely to be UNAUTHORISED e.g. shopping, birthday, minding the house. Check with the Head Teacher if unsure.*
6. *Parents removing their child from school during a session will be required to explain to the administrator/head teacher for the reason for this removal.*
7. *If the child returns to school with no notification of the reason for absence, a standard letter will be sent home, parents seen or telephone contact made.*

Improving Punctuality and Attendance

1. *When children are regularly late for school or a pattern is emerging over a period of time, the administrator will bring this to the attention of the Head Teacher who will then arrange either a letter to be sent home or an appointment to discuss this with the parents/carers.*
2. *Regular newsletters home will emphasise the need for regular and punctual attendance at school and could also remind parents of the importance of not taking holidays in term time.*
3. *Attendance checks are undertaken as follows; every half term HT will review those children whose attendance is less than 95%,90% and 85%; vulnerable groups. Where appropriate parents will be contacted. Each term parents receive a report of their child's attendance.*