

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Millfields Primary School and Nursery

INTRODUCTION

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Any absences should be explained, verbally or in writing to the teacher concerned with, if possible, the predicted date of return.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence, to the Education Welfare Service.

REGISTERS

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day 9am and 1pm, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given.

This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark i.e. after 9.20am.

Registers are marked with the codes used on the attached sheet – [Appendix 1](#).

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Education Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use the Penalty Notice proceedings which came into force on 27th February 2004.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. The EWO for Millfields Primary School is Glen Haag - Education Welfare Officer. Telephone 01270 375232.

Millfields has a process for dealing with persistent absence:

- When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 90% during the year without good reason, a letter will be sent to parents explaining current attendance levels and reminding the parent of their responsibility to ensure their child attends school whenever possible.
- If there has been no improvement in attendance in the following 2 weeks, a further letter will be sent to explain that a referral to the EWO may be necessary.
- If attendance does not improve following the 2nd letter, a referral to the EWO will be made by the school.
- Following investigation any unresolved issue could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 Section 444(A).

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts, etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments, which occur in school time.

HOLIDAY ABSENCE

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that

headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Therefore, leave will only be granted where there are exceptional circumstances and in writing to the Headteacher, such as:

- Factory Shutdown (Company letter to be provided)
- Religious Pilgrimage
- Armed Forces
- Exceptional circumstances to be agreed by the School Governors

Agreed by Governors: May 2017

Review date: May 2019

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Appendix 1

Attendance Codes

Code	School Meaning	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
@	Do not use	Unauthorised Absence	Late for session
B	Educated off site (not Dual reg.)	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised Abs	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
X	DfES #: School closed to pupils	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Z	Do not use	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
!	DfES X: Non-compulsory school age abs	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
#	School closed to pupils & staff	Attendance not required	Out for whole session