



POLICY NAME:	Attendance Policy
Frequency of review:	Annual
Reviewed On:	February 2019
Reviewed By:	Katy Kowalska
Next review (date):	February 2021

Morley Memorial Primary School Attendance Policy

1. Aims and Objectives – Our policy aims to

- Emphasise the importance to all students and families that maximum attendance at school is vital for achieving their full potential.
- Reinforce the notion that every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled and that parents are responsible in law for the regular and punctual attendance of their child.
- Make explicit to all (students, parents/carers, teachers) the schools' expectations on attendance levels and support strategies to help students maximise their attendance.
- Stress the need for home and school to work in partnership to achieve high attendance.
- Promote a consistent approach across the school towards attendance matters.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties linked to attendance at school and in the local authority.

The school sees **95% attendance as the minimum expectation** for all students and strives for all students to attend more than 97%. Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and September 2013 make clear that Head teachers may not authorise holidays (or other Leave of Absence) in term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances. The school upholds these regulations and supports the use of financial penalties and court action where necessary.

2. Procedures and Practices

Registration

Roll call registration (electronic) takes place twice a day

Lateness

Any student arriving in school after registration has been taken will be recorded as 'L' (late). If they arrive after registration period has finished they will be recorded as 'U' (unauthorised absence). At Morley Memorial, registration begins at 9.00 and registers are closed at 9.10. Any child who arrives after 9.10 will be categorised as U (unauthorised absence). Unauthorised absence at the beginning of the day is particularly damaging to a child's academic and social progress and for this reason will be treated very seriously by the school and the EWO.

Absences

Absences from school will be either Authorised or Unauthorised depending upon circumstance.

Authorised absences are where a student has been absent and a satisfactory and legal reason has been communicated to the school via a teacher, direct to the attendance team or whilst representing the school / educational visit. Other reasons include: genuine illness, days of religious observance, unavoidable medical appointments, exceptional circumstances (bereavement / marriage of immediate family member or traveller children going 'on the road'). The school expects authorised absences to be kept to a minimum and therefore routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours or during school holidays wherever possible. **Where absence through illness has led to attendance of below 95%, parents/carers will be expected to provide evidence of illness and/or appointments.**

Unauthorised absences are when no letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parents / carers or the reason provided is not deemed as acceptable by the school. Examples of these may be lateness after the end of registration, attending a birthday celebration, minding a house, caring for a sibling, shopping, lack of childcare, visiting relatives or going on holiday.

The school, using DfE guidelines, makes the final decision about whether or not any absence is seen as authorised or unauthorised. Parents who wish to request absence may do so by completing an absence request form (available via the school website) and returning it to the school office before the absence occurs. Authorisation cannot be granted retrospectively.

Term-Time holidays

The school strongly discourages holidays being taken in term time as learning is disrupted and the lost time is detrimental to the educational progress of the child. Morley Memorial Primary School follows the DfE guidelines (from September 2013) which state that requests for long-term leave can only be granted in 'exceptional circumstances' and decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. No term time leave will be granted, or deemed granted without a formal request on the appropriate forms (available from school reception and on the website) is received and a written response given. Interviews following a request may be conducted prior to any decision being made. The school will not authorise any holidays retrospectively and may follow up any reported illness that we feel may have been a term time holiday. Full details of the absence request procedures are outlined in Appendix 3

UNAUTHORISED TERM TIME LEAVE (includes Holiday): Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave of more than 6 consecutive sessions over a 4 week period, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a Penalty Notice. Such cases will have to be supported by evidence of previous unauthorised term time leave (more than 6 consecutive sessions over a 4 week period) taken in the last 3 years and evidence of parents being warned about a potential Penalty Notice.

3. Strategies used to support and improve attendance at school

Students must attend regularly (minimum of 95%) and punctually (before 9am)

Parents

Parents/carers (or whichever adult the student lives or is staying with) are legally responsible for the child's attendance at school and must ensure that students attend, regularly, on time, in correct attire and with correct equipment. They could be subject to criminal prosecution should their child's attendance fall below acceptable levels.

We expect parents to;

- Telephone or email school on or before the first day of their child's absence to notify of the absence (before 10am)
- Provide satisfactory medical evidence when required to do so (e.g. appointment card or text from GP Surgery, hospital appointment letter etc)
- Attend attendance planning meetings when requested to do so with staff from school and the education welfare officer when necessary.

School

School will;

Roll call registration twice a day (am and pm)

- Contact the parent/carer by telephone or email on the first day of absence if no notification is received.
- Monitor attendance when necessary
- **Use the letter system** to communicate with parents highlighting absence and requesting explanations.
- Investigate unexplained absences **(if no satisfactory evidence is received within 10 days, the absence will remain recorded as unauthorised)**.
- Hold attendance planning meetings to discuss how school can support parents/carers to improve attendance and to set targets.
- Include attendance information on progress reports
- Refer to the Education Welfare Officer when attendance falls below 90%
- Report all children whose attendance falls below 90% to the LA (as per statutory requirements)

The Local Authority (LA)

The local authority (Cambridgeshire County Council) holds the statutory responsibility for school attendance for pupils in all Cambridgeshire schools. Education Welfare Officers act on behalf of the LA to promote attendance and in partnership with schools, enforce attendance through the use of legal sanctions when necessary.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will;

- Liaise with schools to help identify children whose attendance is unacceptable
- Write to parents requesting their attendance at planning meetings, parenting contract meetings and Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) meetings as appropriate
- Hold planning meetings with schools and parents to assist with the planning to meet attendance targets.
- Carry out home visits when appropriate.
- Carry out assessments and broker supportive interventions from a range of external agencies such as the locality team (family work, youth support) when necessary.
- Request the imposition of legal sanctions such as penalty notices, parent contracts, education attendance orders and fines.

4. Additional information

Links to other policies

The importance of good attendance at school has a major link to other policies in school. The main policies that directly link or mention attendance include:

- Teaching and Learning,
- Assessment, Reporting and Marking Policy
- Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Inclusion

Useful Guidance and Websites

Further guidance relating to attendance is recommended to all staff, parents / carers and governors can be found in the following publications

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/schools

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

<http://www.morley.cambs.sch.uk/>

Appendices

Appendix 1 – School Register Codes

Appendix 2 – Roles and Responsibilities

Appendix 3 – Term Time Holiday information

Appendix 4 - CCC Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (Nov 18)

Appendix 1 – School Register codes

The DfE offers a comprehensive set of register codes which all schools are required to use. These codes are as follows:

- /\ - Present am/pm
- B - Educated off site - Approved Educational Activity.
- C - Other authorised circumstances (including public performances licensed by the local authority, family bereavements, exceptional special occasions) - Authorised Absence.
- D - Dual registration (i.e pupil attending other establishment) - Approved Educational Activity.
- E - Excluded (no alternative provision made) - Authorised Absence.
- F - Extended family holiday (agreed) - Authorised Absence.
- G - Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess of agreement) - Unauthorised Absence.
- I - Illness (not medical/dental appointments) - Authorised Absence.
- J - Interview - Approved Educational Activity.
- L - Late (before registers close) - Present.
- M - Medical/Dental appointments - Authorised Absence.
- N - No reason yet provided for absence - Unauthorised Absence.
- O - Unauthorised Absence.
- P - Approved Sporting Activity - Approved Educational Activity.
- R - Religious Observance - Authorised Absence.
- S - Study Leave - Authorised Absence.
- T - Traveller child travelling - Authorised Absence.
- U - Late after registers close without an acceptable explanation - Unauthorised Absence
- V - Educational visit or trip - Approved Educational Activity.
- V - Non-compulsory school age absence - not counted in possible attendances.
- Y - Enforced closure – not counted in possible attendances.
- Z - Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances.
- # - School closed – not counted in possible attendance.

Teachers are only required to use a limited number of the codes. The attendance office, manager and attendance leader should be consulted before entering codes that are different to those on the default settings via the electronic registration system.

Appendix 2 – Roles and responsibilities

All staff - are expected to be excellent role models by having outstanding attendance and punctuality records

Appendix 3 - Information about Term Time Holidays

The following information has been taken directly from the Cambridgeshire County Council website: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-&-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities/term-time-holidays/>

Term time holidays

Children of school age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Regular attendance is the best way of ensuring that a child makes the most of the educational opportunities which are available to him or her.

When a child is absent from school, he or she misses not only the teaching provided but is also less prepared for the lessons after his or her return.

There are only 190 statutory school days in one year and 175 days (weekends and school holidays) available to use for holidays. Therefore every school day counts!

Key information

Prior to June 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 allowed for headteachers to grant leave of absence for a term time family holiday in 'special circumstances' and for extended leave in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to these regulations remove references to family holidays and extended leave. The amendments make it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and that headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Your rights and responsibilities

If your child is registered at school you must ensure that they attend regularly.

The regulations make it clear that parents do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purposes of a term time holiday.

If parents take their child on holiday in term time this will be counted as unauthorised absence - this is the same as truancy and you may be at risk of a penalty notice being applied.

What you can do

Look at the school's attendance policy on the website for full information.

Speak to the school direct if you feel you need to take your child out of school in exceptional circumstances

Appendix 4 – Cambridgeshire County Council Penalty Notice Code of Conduct

The following is a copy of the CCC Penalty Notice Code of Conduct taken directly from the Cambridgeshire County Council website:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-&-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities/term-time-holidays/>

PENALTY NOTICES NON-SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL AUTHORITY CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

1. Under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 local education authority officers, headteachers and the police have the discretionary power to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.
2. The new power provides an alternative to prosecution of parents under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days.
3. Should the Penalty Notice remain unpaid or have been paid only in part at the end of the 28 day period Cambridgeshire County Council must prosecute the parents for the offence to which the notice relates, or, in specified circumstances (see section 29 below), withdraw the notice.
4. Penalty Notices may only be issued in Cambridgeshire in accordance with the terms of this Code of Conduct. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that the power is applied fairly and consistently across the County Council and that suitable arrangements are in place for the effective and efficient administration of the scheme.
5. In implementing this Code of Conduct the County Council will liaise when appropriate with neighbouring education and police authorities.
6. This Code of Conduct has been drafted in accordance with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004: Statutory Instrument 2004 No 181 and guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills.
7. In preparing this Code of Conduct the County Council has consulted with Cambridgeshire headteachers and the Chief Officer of Cambridgeshire Constabulary. This complies with The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007.

Circumstances in which Penalty Notices may be issued

8. Penalty Notice may be considered as an alternative to prosecution for failure to ensure regular school attendance in any given period of unauthorised school attendance as below:

A. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE: As the Government changed the PA (Persistent Absence) threshold to 90% (in effect from Sept. 2015), the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice in relation to a child whose attendance at school is 90% or less over a given period. There must be at least 8 unauthorised sessions over an 8 week period with all absences recorded as unauthorised or 90% and below mostly unauthorised over a longer period. To allow time and opportunity for early intervention work with the family, attendance will be monitored by school and Local Authority before enforcement actions are considered. Such a Fine is intended to offer a rapid intervention, which may be used to address non-school attendance before it becomes entrenched, following guidance in section 13 of 'PN Code of Conduct'.

B. UNAUTHORISED TERM TIME LEAVE(includes Holiday): Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave for 6 consecutive sessions (3 days) or more, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a Penalty Notice. **Therefore Penalty Notices will be issued for single event absences of at least 3 consecutive school days or more where these absences are unauthorised because they are neither exceptional nor unavoidable. The absences must be recorded with a 'G' code in the attendance register.** Such cases will have to be supported by evidence of parents being warned about a potential Penalty Notice. (The Supreme Court Judgement in the case between Isle of Wight Council v Platt (6th April 2017) clarified the meaning of regular school attendance in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996. To attend school "regularly" means "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".)

Procedural guidelines

9. The key consideration in deciding whether to issue a Penalty Notice should be whether it is considered likely to be effective in helping the child to whom it relates to return to regular attendance.
10. Before issuing a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence (refer to section 8A), due consideration should be given to other strategies which may help return the child concerned to regular school attendance. Such strategies might include:
- writing to the child's parents to remind them of their legal responsibilities;
 - meeting with the child's parents;
 - ensuring a first-day response to any absence;
 - setting targets for improvement;
 - referral to the Education Welfare Officer;
 - involvement of other services/agencies.

NB. Above strategies do not apply to term time leave / holiday. (refer to section 8B)

11. It is expected that schools will communicate with parents and issue a warning about potential Penalty Notice fine being issued for unauthorised absences. This warning can be in the form of communication sent to parents via school Newsletters, School Web page as well as any direct mail sent to individual parents.
12. Head teachers and police officers should only issue a Penalty Notice following consultation, discussion, reflection and joint decision with a County Council Education Welfare Officer.
13. The Education Welfare Officer will not agree to sanction the issuing of a Penalty Notice unless he/she considers that with regard to the offence to which it relates there is sufficient evidence to secure a conviction under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Evidence could be letters sent to parent, minutes of meetings and record of telephone conversations.
14. A maximum of three Penalty Notices may be served on any one parent over a 12- month period.
15. **There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.** A parent should therefore, if possible, be given warning of the possibility of a notice being issued (refer section 13) in order to allow him/her to make representations should he/she wish to do so. If a head teacher refuses to authorise any absence or requests for holidays during term time and parents are not happy with the decision, they should make representations to the Governing Body of the school. They should not wait and make a representation to the County Council once a Penalty Notice has been issued.

Authority to Issue a Penalty Notice

16. An Education Welfare Officer / CCC Legal Panel may issue a Penalty Notice to the parent of a child who is a registered pupil at a school in Cambridgeshire or who is a registered pupil at a school in an authority, which has an agreement to that effect with Cambridgeshire County Council.
17. A headteacher or an authorised deputy or assistant headteacher may issue a Penalty Notice to the parent of a child who is registered at his/her school, in consultation with a CCC Legal Panel.
18. A police officer, including a community support officer or other accredited person, may issue a Penalty Notice.
19. Head teachers and Police Officers should comply with the terms of this Code of Conduct when issuing a Penalty Notice and should provide a copy of any notice issued to the relevant Education Welfare Officer.

Form and Content of Penalty Notices

20. A Penalty Notice should give the following particulars alleged to constitute the offence to which the notice relates and should contain:
 - a) the name and address of the person to whom the notice is issued;

- b) the name and address of the child who is failing to attend school regularly and the name of the school at which he/she is a registered pupil;
 - c) the name, title and official details of the authorised person issuing the notice;
 - d) the date of the offence and of the issue of the notice;
 - e) the amount of the penalty which is to be paid and details of the timescales and any variation involved;
 - f) the address of the County Council office at which the penalty is to be paid and to which any correspondence relating to the notice may be sent;
 - g) the method/methods by which payment may be made;
 - h) the specified period within which the penalty should be paid;
 - i) a statement that full payment within the specified period will discharge any liability for the offence;
 - j) an explanation of the consequences should the penalty not be paid in full before the expiry of the specified period;
 - k) an explanation of the grounds on which the notice may be withdrawn.
21. Should there be more than one person liable for the offence (Section 576 Education Act 1996) a separate notice should be issued to each person, per each child.
22. Should the offence involve more than one child a separate notice should be issued for each child, per each parent.

Service of Penalty Notices

23. A Penalty Notice may be served by:
- a) giving it to the recipient; or
 - b) leaving it at the recipient's usual or last-known address; or
 - c) sending it to the recipient at that address by first-class post.
24. Service by post is deemed to have been effected, unless the contrary is proved, on the second working day after posting the notice by first-class post.

Methods of Payment

25. The preferred method of payment of a Penalty Notice would be on-line payment via the Cambridgeshire County Council website. However, alternatives methods are available on request. Late or part payments (including instalments) will not be accepted and no reminders will be sent.

Failure to Pay a Penalty Notice

26. Should the recipient of a Penalty Notice fail to pay the full amount before the expiry of the period for paying it the County Council will either begin proceedings against the parent under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or withdraw the notice in accordance with specified conditions (see section 29 below).
27. An electronic record will be retained to monitor that the recipient of a Penalty Notice has or has not paid the amount due on or before the date specified and presented as evidence in any subsequent Section 444 Education Act 1996 proceedings.

Withdrawal of a Penalty Notice

28. A Penalty Notice may be withdrawn by the County Council, regardless of whom within the authority issued it, if it is deemed that:
 - a) the notice ought not to have been issued (i.e. where it has issued outside of the terms of this Code of Conduct or where no offence has been committed); or
 - b) the notice ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient.
29. Should a Penalty Notice be withdrawn:
 - a) notice of the withdrawal should be given to the recipient;
 - b) any amount already paid by the recipient should be reimbursed;
 - c) any proceedings under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 instituted against the recipient should be discontinued.
 - d)

Retention of Receipts and Revenue Collection

30. The County Council will retain all revenue from the issuing of Penalty Notices in order to cover the costs of issuing and enforcing notices and the cost of prosecuting those recipients of the notices who fail to pay.
31. The County Council will produce an annual audit statement as part of its usual audit procedures in order to show that income received from Penalty Notices does not exceed enforcement costs as defined above. Any surplus acquired will be surrendered to a consolidated fund.