



POLICY NAME:	Attendance Policy
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Reviewed By:	K Kowalska
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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, staff) the schools' expectations on attendance levels and support strategies to help students maximise their attendance.
- Emphasise the need for home and school to work in partnership to achieve high attendance and punctuality.
- Promote an ethos which is consistent and supportive of high levels of attendance and punctuality
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties linked to attendance at school and in the local authority, including the legal responsibilities of parents and carers.

We aim to improve the achievement of pupils by:

- expecting children attend every day, on time, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence
- encouraging good habits of punctuality and attendance from Early Years to Year 6
- supporting parents and children to improve attendance
- promoting high levels of attendance and punctuality across the school community

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

We aim for 100% attendance for all children.

The school has a safeguarding duty of care to all its pupils. We take the role of ensuring a child's good attendance and punctuality as part of our safeguarding duties.

2. The law regarding regular school attendance and punctuality:

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers of a child of compulsory school age (the term after the child turns five) are under a legal duty to ensure that their child receives full-time education; and, that they have a legal duty to ensure the regular attendance and punctuality of that child at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and September 2013 make clear that Head teachers may not authorise 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.

3. Procedures and Practices

3.1 Registration

It is a legal requirement that a register of attendance is taken during the morning and afternoon at school. Any unexplained absence must be coded as unauthorised until a reason is given by parents/carers. This must be no later than 5 days after the session.

Only the Headteacher may authorise or unauthorise an absence.

The register can only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, the register will show the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment. Registers are kept for six years as a record.

Roll call registration (electronic) takes place twice a day.

In the morning, **registration begins at 8:45 a.m. and registers are closed at 9:05 a.m.**

In the afternoon, registration takes place during the first 10 minutes after lunch break (timing dependent on year group timetable).

3.2 Lateness

When children arrive late at school, they disrupt routines, affect other children's learning, miss the teacher's instructions to the lesson and may also feel awkward or embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late. They may also miss important intervention programmes and the opportunity to practice key learning skills.

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). Any child who arrives after 9.05 a.m. 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 Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer.

Where pupils show a persistent pattern of lateness, parents/carers will receive contact from the school advising them of the concern and offering support to resolve the issue. Should the lateness continue, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting at school to discuss their child's lateness.

If there is no improvement, despite the school's attempts to address unauthorised absences, a referral could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team for pupils who are of statutory school age.

4.0 Absences

4.1 Reporting a pupil absence:

Parents/carers must contact school on the first and every subsequent day of absence before 9:00 a.m.

For any pupil not present at the close of registration, and the reason is still unknown, a member of staff will attempt to make contact with the parent/carers once the registers have closed.

The member of staff will attempt to make contact until a reason for absence is known. Messages will be left on voicemail requesting parents/carers contact school regarding their child's absence. Outcomes of any phone conversations will be logged on the pupil's electronic school record. Staff will complete the registers in accordance with the correct use of registration codes (see appendix 1).

Any unexplained absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence if there is no response from a parent/carer to an enquiry regarding their child's absence from school. As appropriate, safeguarding processes will be followed if contact has not been possible.

For absences relating to a medical appointment, supporting information may be requested to authorise this absence. This could be an electronic or written communication from a medical professional. A period of absence will only be authorised in relation to the length of the appointment.

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

4.2 Authorised absences

An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason such as:

- Illness or medical appointment
- A day of religious observance- only a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong to.
- Leave due to a short-term, exceptional, unavoidable circumstance such as bereavement or medical emergency

4.3 Illness

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. There is an expectation that the pupil will be in school for registration or return to school after the appointment, depending on where the appointment falls within the school day and the health of the pupil.

Children who are unable to attend school due to vomiting and/or diarrhoea should only return after they have been 48 hours clear after the last episode.

Children with mild coughs, colds, sore throats, sneezes and runny noses who are otherwise well can continue to attend school. However, if they develop a high temperature they should stay at home until their temperature has reduced and they are well enough to return to school.

A guide to whether your child is able to attend school with minor illnesses is here: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/) The information is backed up by the Department for Education (DfE). We expect children to attempt to come to school unless they are too unwell to complete basic tasks. We will contact you if they need to return home.

4.4 Medical needs and SEND

We are able to make adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments must be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with school, the pupil and their parents/carers. See our 'Supporting Children with Medical Needs and Conditions Policy.'

4.5 Unauthorised absences

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school, even with the support of the parent/carers, such as:

- Shopping, hair appointments, visiting family, taking part in a protest or birthdays.
- There has been no reason provided by the parent/carers to support an absence.
- Failure to follow school procedures or inform the school when taking a pupil out of school during term time.
- A leave of absence that has not been authorised due to not being considered an exceptional circumstance.

Attendance coding is always informed by DfE guidelines.

Parents who wish to request absence may do so by completing an absence request form (available from School Office, the school website and in Appendix 2) and returning it to the school office before the absence occurs. Authorisation cannot be granted retrospectively.

4.6 Term-Time Leave

Parents do not have the right or entitlement to take children out of school for a term-time holiday. Recent government guidelines (September 2024) have removed the discretion for head teachers to agree to term-time leave for holidays.

Morley Memorial Primary School follows the Department for Education (DfE) guidelines 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.

Any requests for leave of absence need to be submitted before the leave is taken. Parents must complete a Term-Time Leave Request Form (available from School Office and in Appendix 2) and provide any supporting evidence, if applicable, with their request. This also applies to parents requesting to take their child out of school during the school day.

No term time leave will be granted, or deemed granted without a formal request on the appropriate forms received and a written (including via email) response given. Follow-up queries on receipt of a request may be made prior to any decision being taken.

If it is suspected that term-time leave has been taken but the parents/carers have not completed a Term-Time Leave Request Form, we will contact the parents/carers giving them an opportunity to clarify the reason for absence and provide supporting evidence. Failure to respond to or provide supporting evidence may result in a referral to the Local Authority for unauthorised leave from school.

Exceptional circumstances (*definition of exceptional: rare, unavoidable, short*) will be considered on an individual basis.

Examples of requests for leave of absence that **do not** meet the criteria of an exceptional circumstance and **will not** be authorised and could be subject to a Penalty Notice fine/prosecution for pupils of statutory school age are:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad.

- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term, or bank holiday weekends.
- Trip of a lifetime.
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates.
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad.
- Relatives coming to visit.
- Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence if it does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance.
- Leave taken due to potential travel disruption.

Absence Request form available in Appendix 2

4.7 General Non-Attendance

General non-attendance is when a pupil is absent from school, without it being exceptional circumstances and without it being authorised by school.

If your child has irregular school attendance, the school will work with parents/carers to identify the barriers to attendance and will try to find ways to remove those barriers.

This support outlined in Section 7.1

If your child continues to be absent without authorisation from the school, then you may be referred to the Local Authority for legal sanctions to be considered. The threshold for this would be 10 sessions (an AM or PM mark in the register is one session) over a period of 10 or more school weeks.

Before school refer to the Local Authority for non-attendance, we will work with you and offer support.

We may offer you an Attendance Contract Meeting which is a supportive pathway where we discuss the barriers to attendance and try to break them down. An alternative action might be considered if you do not engage in support from school - we may set targets for your child's attendance jointly with the Local Authority, with the aim that it improves. This is called a Notice to Improve and is a last attempt at improving attendance before legal sanctions are sought.

5.0 Penalty Notices

Failure to ensure a child's regular attendance at school is a criminal offence.

We follow DfE and Local Authority (LA) guidelines and procedures for attendance and penalty notice procedures as outlined on the CCC website:

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities/non-attendance-and-the-law

6.0 Children Missing in Education

If a pupil fails to attend school for 10 consecutive days, without explanation, and the school does not know where the pupil is, the school will refer the pupil to the Local Authority as a Child Missing in Education. After a further 10 days of absence with no explanation, your child is at risk of losing their school place with us. During this 20-day period, school will continue to try and contact you, and will liaise with any other services that your child is open to. The Local Authority will conduct investigations into the location and educational provision of the child.

7.0 Strategies used to support and improve attendance at school

Schools are responsible for regularly monitoring attendance data, and are required to report attendance data to the DfE. We use attendance data to inform strategies for supporting good and improving attendance. Where children whose attendance is falling or deemed to be a concern this will be communicated to parents and carers. We will work with families in different ways to overcome barriers to attendance. This may include working with other agencies, for example, Young Carers or Children's Social Care.

Children whose attendance falls to 90% or below are deemed to be 'persistently absent' and can be referred to the Local Authority for enforcement action.

Children whose attendance is 50% or below are 'severely persistently absent' and parents/carers will be expected to engage in substantial support.

7.1 Supporting Attendance

As a school, we aim to work collaboratively with parents/carers to improve school attendance. This means that we will **listen, empathise and support with attendance. However, if this is unsuccessful, legal sanctions will be considered where appropriate.**

When required, support strategies with a monitoring period will be put in place to help improve the attendance or lateness of a pupil. Should a pupil's attendance or lateness continue to be a concern despite the support strategies in place, with no improvement to the expected level set by school, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team for statutory aged pupils. This could result in a Penalty Notice/fine, or prosecution being issued by Cambridgeshire County Council, as per section 444 Education Act 1996. This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

The general process for supporting attendance is as follows (please note, there may be exceptions to this process). Lateness and attendance are monitored by school staff who will:

- Monitor authorised/unauthorised absence and other reasons provided for pupil absence and lateness.
- Raise concerns with parents/carers of identified patterns of lateness with an initial 'Late Letter'.
- Contact parents by telephone, email, or letter to establish a reason for a pupil's absence if the reason is unknown.
- Raise concerns with parents/carers once attendance has fallen below an acceptable level following the steps below.
- Monitor and respond to pupil absences for those with additional medical needs.
- Monitor pupils and follow procedures for pupils who are 'Children Missing in Education'.
- Follow reporting procedures for parents who have requested to home educate their child.
- Follow statutory procedures when deleting a pupil from roll.
- Monitor absences for illness and requests for leave to attend medical appointments.
- Reporting pupils to the Local Authority when they have 10 consecutive 'O' coded (unauthorised absence) sessions in school.
- Report pupils with unauthorised term-term leave absences (10 consecutive sessions of 'G' codes) to the Local Authority for issuing of a legal sanction to parents/carers.
- Report pupils with 15 consecutive days of 'I' (illness) codes to the Local Authority

Step One

Telephone call, initial letter or other contact advising parent/carers of our concerns regarding the level of their child's attendance/lateness, and offering support.

Step Two

Send a letter or email to offer support and further explain the effect the absence/lateness is having on the child.

Step Three

Send an invitation to attend a meeting to enter into an **Attendance Contract**. This is a supportive meeting, entered into voluntarily to discuss the needs of a pupil and family and identify ways that barriers to attendance can be removed.

Step Four

Should the Attendance Contract fail to improve attendance, or should there be no engagement with interventions and support despite every attempt by the school to support the family, a request for the issue of a penalty notice/fine or prosecution could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team for children of statutory school age.

At Step 3 or 4, school may use a **Notice To Improve** letter, a strategy used in partnership with the Local Authority to set targets for improved attendance. This is a final attempt to improve attendance when parents/carers are failing to engage with support being offered by school, before referring parents for legal sanctions.

Following use of one of the two pathways above (Attendance Contract or Notice to Improve), if attendance does not improve, school will refer to the Local Authority for legal sanctions.

If attendance improves at any point, the next step may be postponed.

8.0 Expectations

Children must attend regularly (minimum of 95%) and punctually (before 8:45).

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

We expect parents to:

- **Ensure that children are in school on time.**
- **Telephone or email school on or before the first and each day of their child's absence to notify of the absence (before 9:00 a.m.)**
- Provide satisfactory medical evidence when required to do so e.g. appointment card or SMS notification from GP Surgery, hospital appointment letter etc
- Attend attendance planning meetings when requested to do so with staff from school and the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer when necessary.

School will;

- Roll call registration twice a day (am and pm)
- Contact the parent/carer by telephone or email on the first and subsequent day/s of absence if no notification is received.
- Monitor attendance
- Use the Local Authority step system to communicate with parents highlighting absence and requesting explanations.
- Follow-up 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.
- Follow DfE and LA attendance guidance where a child's attendance falls below 90%.

The Local Authority (LA) (Cambridgeshire County Council) holds the statutory responsibility for school attendance for pupils in all Cambridgeshire schools. Local Authority Attendance Improvement 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 Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO), 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 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.

9.0 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:

- Safeguarding
- Teaching and Learning,
- Assessment, Feedback and Marking Policy
- Behaviour
- Inclusion
- Supporting Children with Medical Needs and Conditions

<http://www.morley.cambs.sch.uk/our-school/policies/>

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

Cambridgeshire

Information for Parents and Carers Education: rights and responsibilities

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

General Attendance Expectations

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities/school-attendance>

Attendance and the Law

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities/non-attendance-and-the-law>

Scan QR Code below for direct link to Cambridgeshire County Council Attendance information.



DfE

School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance#full-publication>

Appendices

Appendix 1 – School Register Codes

Appendix 2 – Term Time Leave request form

Appendix 1 – School Register codes

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

Present Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip
W	work experience
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absence	
G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Z	pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)

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

Further detail for attendance codes can be found in Chapter 8 of Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

Appendix 2

Request for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances



Unless it is an emergency please complete and return this form to the school office at least one week prior to the requested dates of absence. Permission cannot be granted retrospectively.

At Morley Memorial Primary School, we are committed to giving all our children every opportunity to do well at school. As such, we believe that regular attendance at school is essential to enable children to make progress. Holidays in term time are **not** an entitlement. Inevitable disruption is caused to learning if holidays are taken during term time. Headteachers are not permitted to authorise term time leave which is a holiday. Absence *may* only be granted, at the discretion of the headteacher, in very exceptional circumstances.

To be considered 'an exceptional circumstance' the request must be for a short period of absence, rare and unavoidable.

Exceptional circumstances might include:

- A day/s of religious observance
- Hospital appointments which cannot be scheduled for out of school hours
- External examinations or school transfer visits
- There has recently been a death or significant other emergency or trauma in the family and travel is required
- The parent is a member of the armed forces on leave from active duty abroad and can only have family holiday during this period.

The school provides a calendar of school term and holiday dates so that parents/carers are appropriately informed and given enough notice so that they can **book holiday/time off from work to coincide with school holidays (of which there are usually 13 weeks spread throughout the year)**.

If the school does not grant permission and parents/carers take their child out of school, the absence will be classified as **unauthorised** absence, that is, as **truancy**, and the matter may be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer who may begin legal proceedings.

Any parent/s who takes a child out of school for term time leave for ten sessions (5 school days) or more, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a Penalty Notice.

Note:

- The national threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.
- A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session.
- This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence.
e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks
- These sessions can be consecutive or not.
e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week or 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks
- The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years.
e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term.

Working together to improve school attendance - August 2024 - GOV.UK

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities/non-attendance-and-the-law

Name of child..... Class.....

I request a leave of absence for my child from..... to(a total of days)

The exceptional circumstances for this absence are:

.....
.....
.....

Signature of parent/carer..... Date.....

Office use only

The pupil's current attendance is: _____ %

a) Permission is given

b) Permission is not given for the above leave of absence
because it does not meet the criteria of exceptional circumstance

c) Other.....

Signed..... (Headteacher) Date.....