



Attendance Policy For Parents

September 2022

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Mortimer Primary School is committed to ensuring that all of its pupils receive a full education so that they achieve their best possible potential and establish good and lasting friendships with their peers.

Regular and punctual attendance is both a legal requirement and crucial for pupils to maximise the educational opportunities available to them.

To achieve this, staff in school will work closely with parents and families to establish strong home school links and ensure there are the communication systems in place to underpin these. Staff are committed to working in partnership to strive to achieve a minimum of 96% attendance throughout school.

This policy is designed to adhere to the expectations of the document:

School attendance, Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, May 22:

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to a full-time education
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Inform parents of their legal duty by ensuring children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly
- Ensure all pupils are punctual to their lessons

Absence

Authorised Absence

An authorised absence is when a pupil is not at school for a reason acceptable to the school. The school (not the parent) determines whether an absence is authorised or not, after receipt of a phone call or a written explanation from the parent/carer.

Unauthorised Absence

Mortimer Primary School strongly discouraged parents from taking their children out of school during term time.

The school will follow up on all unauthorised absences requesting explanations for the absence.

1. A phone call is made on the first day of absence
2. A follow up phone call is made if necessary
3. An unauthorised letter is sent home

Leave of Absence Forms / Requests

- A special leave of absence can be authorised at the head teacher's discretion but evidence will be required. This will only occur in **exceptional** circumstances.
- The head teacher **cannot** authorise absence from school for a family holiday.
- Evidence must be provided for medical appointments.
- Religious observances will go to the attendance lead for approval.
- If a parent/carer feels it is absolutely unavoidable to take their child out of school, they must complete a leave of absence request form, in advance (4 weeks), for consideration by the school.
- If this is the situation, each case will be considered individually based on the nature of the request, the child's current attendance as well as previous attendance percentages. Parents will be informed by email of the decision on their request.
- Any time taken without the school's authorisation, or any additional time taken over and above the amount authorised will be recorded as unauthorised absence and if ten or more sessions, will result in a penalty notice (see Code of Conduct for Education Related Penalty Notices).

- If a pupil does not return on the agreed date, the school will make every effort to contact the family by telephone and in writing. If no contact is made, or if the absence has been extended for anything other than unavoidable circumstances, the school will refer this to the ISIT team if they do not return within 10 school days. If no contact is made with the family by school or contact and referral then a letter will be sent to parent/carer informing them that the pupil has been taken off roll, this will always be done in consultation with the Admissions Team.

Punctuality

Mortimer Primary School starts at 8.50 a.m. It is expected that all pupils arrive in good time. If pupils arrive after 9.00am they will be marked as late. A reason will be logged by the office staff.

Lateness is monitored by the school. A late letter will automatically be sent to parents/carers if there is regular lateness.

Monitoring Attendance and Responding to Patterns of Attendance

School staff will respond when a pattern of low attendance emerges. This may include:

- A member of staff discussing attendance informally
- A letter being sent home informing parents of the number of hours 'lost learning'
- A request for medical evidence
- A meeting to discuss any patterns of poor attendance. Initially this could be with Mrs Peacock, Attendance Lead, and an Attendance Improvement Plan may be implemented. Following on from this, the LA's Attendance Officer, Bev Scott, in conjunction with the school, will determine a course of action.
- If there is still no improvement after suitable interventions by the school, the local authority attendance enforcement team will become involved following a referral from the school.

To ensure that all patterns of low attendance are identified and dealt with swiftly, Mrs Peacock (Lead on Attendance) and Bev Scott (LA Attendance Officer) will meet each half term to discuss and agree a course of action for all pupils with attendance concerns.

Supporting the Reintegration of pupils after Extended Absences

All pupils who return to school after an extended period of absence need to be supported. Each case will be considered individually and a plan will be drawn up to best support the pupil's academic and social reintegration into the school.

Communicating with Parents

Thank you for taking the time to read this document. At Mortimer we know that it is essential that parents/carers of all pupils understand the school's attendance policy and their role in ensuring their child has good attendance.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their children arrive at school on time each day.

Parents/carers must contact the school in person or on the telephone to provide an explanation on the first day their child is absent. If the absence continues into the following week, we request that parents get in touch to give us an update.