



MURRAY PARK SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Title of Policy	Attendance
Date of adoption	Spring 2021
Originator	Rebecca Somes
Date of review	Spring 2023
Additional information	<p>Update January 2021</p> <p>Data will be processed in line with requirements and protections set in the UK General Data Protection Regulation</p> <p>This policy is to be adopted when school is fully open, it is not adopted under the current circumstances in relation to Covid-19. There is separate government guidance for Covid-19.</p>

NB – Throughout this document **parent** refers to **parent/carer** **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY STATEMENT**

Murray Park School is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers, so that students achieve their full academic and personal potential. For a child to achieve this a high level of school attendance is essential. We carefully monitor attendance and punctuality and work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children.

Good regular attendance, allows students to benefit as fully as possible from everything the school has to offer. When absences occur it is more difficult for students to achieve their best. We realise that some absences are unavoidable, and offer a range of support if students have particular problems. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents the importance of regular and punctual attendance. In light of this, parents are asked to take steps to ensure students attend school every day.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The School aims to achieve good attendance by operating a policy within which staff, pupils, parents, the Education Welfare Service and others can work in partnership. The School will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if/when a problem is identified.

The School promotes good attendance by:

- Developing a positive classroom climate in which a positive group identity produces welcoming lessons.
- Having high expectations of prompt attendance throughout the school day
- Seeing good attendance as an achievement. Recognises and rewards consistent regular attendance of individuals, tutor groups, year groups etc. as part of the School's reward system.
- Collecting and analysing data to highlight trends with regard to cohort, gender and subject and to set targets where necessary.
- Ensuring that attendance is a feature of assessment data sent to parents/carers.
- Monitoring lateness.
- Improving communication with parents about the importance of regular and punctual school attendance
- Involving students in developing positive strategies to improve attendance.
- Giving attendance a continuing high profile by frequently updated information displayed prominently throughout the School and the school website.

Our objectives are as follows;

- To reduce the number of total non-attenders to less than 5%
- To establish regular contact with all families of
 - Poor attenders (below 90%)
 - Persistently late students

- To reduce the numbers of Persistent Absentees to less than 10%
- To have 100% registration (am/pm registration and every lesson)

RESPONSIBILITIES AND STRATEGIES

- A Service Level Agreement will be negotiated annually between the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and the School with key roles and responsibilities defined.
- The EWS fulfils the statutory duty of the LA in enforcing regular school attendance. In doing so it enables School and parents/carers to meet their respective responsibilities.
- Parents are informed of the procedures and expectations when their child is first admitted to the School. They will also be advised on the School's policy in the School Prospectus and on the Website.
- The School works closely with the LA and other services to identify ways in which their work will support improved attendance.
- The Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance will monitor attendance throughout the School. The School is required to submit overall levels of absence and school attendance to the Local Authority (LA) each half term. Attendance information is submitted to the DfE via the School Census.
- The Attendance Officer will submit attendance data to the Head Teacher, SLT (Attendance) and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) on a regular basis.
- Form tutors will monitor attendance closely.
- Staff who take pupils out of the School on organised visits will give a list of the students, with dates and times of the visit, to the Attendance Officer.
- Parents are informed of their responsibilities, the measures taken by the School and the Education Welfare Service to ensure good attendance and how to seek support or advice in relation to attendance issues.
- Vulnerable and "at risk" pupils will be closely monitored by form tutors and by Senior Staff with responsibilities for particular groups.
- Those responsible for pupils' placements off-site will provide the Attendance Officer with a regular record of their attendance.

RESPONDING TO ABSENCES

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to students the importance and value of education. Pupils are expected to attend school for the full 190 days each year unless there is a good reason for absence.

Where a pupil is absent from school the school must differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. By law, only the school can approve absence, not parents. Generally school will accept an explanation as to why a student may be absent. However in certain circumstances School may require further evidence to justify the explanation e.g. high level of absence for minor health reasons, unusual

patterns of absence for instance the same day each week or frequent broken weeks or, where the School believe unauthorised leave of absence has been taken.

ILLNESS AND OTHER LEGITIMATE REASONS Parents

- It is expected that parents will provide an explanation (rather than 'ill') if their child is absent on the first day and any subsequent days of absence. This can be by letter, telephone or by email to the Attendance Officer. Refer to details below
- If contact, explaining the pupil's absence, fails to be made by parents, then the School will contact the home by using School Comms on the initial day. This will be repeated and followed up by a telephone call or letter if no explanation is received. These contacts will be recorded on Go4schools.
- A pupil who has been absent for more than 3 days with continued unexplained absence, parents will be contacted by the Attendance Officer or EWO.
- Pupils who fail to return to the School on the agreed day after a fixed – term exclusion, with no explanation, will also be subject to first day contact by the Attendance Officer.

Parents should contact the School Absence Line on (01332) 515921, option 1 before 9:30am or alternatively e-mail us at: student.services@murraypark.derby.sch.uk.

Any emails will be followed up by a telephone call from the Attendance Administrator. This should be repeated for every day of illness, then a note from parent/carer explaining the period of absence should be handed to the Form Tutor on the day of return to school. It is acceptable to record this note in the relevant page of the school planner.

On telephoning, parents are requested to state:

- Child's full name and form
- The reason for absence
- The date(s) your child(ren) will be absent
- When you expect them to return to school

Children should never be kept off school for reasons such as shopping, minding the house, minding a sibling or pet, buying school uniform or as a treat. Parents should in all cases aim to make appointments involving children out of school hours. **The School will decide** in all cases whether to authorise an absence on the basis of evidence available to it.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

In accordance with Government and LA guidelines the school will not authorise any absence for holidays. Government legislation from September 1st 2013 states Schools

can only grant requests for leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances. Examples of exceptional circumstances would be:

- Military Staff returning from active service
- Marriage/bereavement of an immediate relative i.e. parent/sibling
- Funeral of extended family members

Requests for leave of absence during term time should be made in writing to the Head teacher as far in advance as possible. Parents who take their children out of school during term time and the absence has not been authorised are at risk of being issued with a Penalty Notice. If the School believe that an explanation for an absence is incorrect, after investigation, the absence will be unauthorised and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each Parent payable up to £120 per Parent per Child for unauthorised absence.

REGISTRATION

8.40am – 9.00am, morning registration closes at 9.00am

Period 4 1.00pm, afternoon registration

All lesson registers must be taken within 10 minutes of the start of a lesson.

REGISTRATION

- The twice-daily registration of pupils (Registration period and period 4) is a legal requirement. The accuracy of registration is essential and registers may be required in a court of law for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. Printed copies of these registers are kept as a legal requirement.
- All staff must be vigilant when registering pupils for lessons, and report immediately any unexplained absence of a pupil who has attended lessons already during the day. This should be reported to the Attendance Officer and recorded.

OUT OF SCHOOL VISITS

Staff who take students out of school on organised visits will give a list of the students, with dates and times of the visit, to the Attendance Officer.

WITHDRAWAL GROUPS

Staff who take students out of normal lessons for small group work will give a list of the attendance of the withdrawal group to the Attendance Officer at the start of the lesson. In addition to informing the staff from the lesson the student has been withdrawn from.

LATENESS TO SCHOOL

- All students are expected to arrive at school on time and be at their form rooms before 8:40am. Any students arriving at the school site unable to make it to their form room for 8:40am will be deemed late. The Gate at the rear of the school site will be closed at 8.45 to secure the site. Student approaching the site from this direction must then walk round to the Main gate for admittance into school.

- The School will ensure there are regular 'Late Gate' staff at the Main Gate during registration to meet with students who are arriving late and note reasons for this. Students who arrive during registration should then report to their form tutors, or to Student Services on an Assembly day.
- Students arriving after registration MUST report to Student Services to sign in at the reception desk there where their time of arrival will be noted as well as a reason for their lateness.
- Students who are late to school will be kept in for a same day lunch time detention in the Main Hall. Failure to attend this detention will result in an after school detention with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If the student arrives 15 minutes or more after registration this is then counted as an unauthorised absence.
- Lateness to lessons disrupts the learning of others and cannot be deemed acceptable. Students who arrive late for lessons will serve a 'minute for minute' detention if it is less than 5 minutes or a more severe detention of up to 30 minutes if they are any later.

The Education Act, 1996 states:

"It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational need(s) he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

Case law states persistent lateness does not constitute "full time" education. Students who persistently come to school late are not receiving 'full-time' education. Therefore a parent is potentially in breach of the law if they do not ensure their child arrives on time. Persistent lateness to school will be questioned and investigated and may result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEES

Where a student's attendance is lower than 90% the school will exercise caution in authorising any absence and may not do so without a discussion with parents as to the exact nature of the absence. Key staff at the school will meet on a weekly basis in order to analyse the attendance patterns of those students who are below 90%. At this meeting actions will be identified for all in-school staff and for out of school staff such as the Education Welfare Service.

In the first instance a student will be spoken to by their Tutor/Head of Year highlighting that their attendance is becoming an issue. If an improvement is not immediate then parents will be invited to a meeting with the Tutor/Head of Year. Further issues will result in a meeting being organized with the Head of Year and the Education Welfare Officer, at this point legal proceedings will begin if no immediate improvement is apparent.

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to these there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff groups such as the following:

Head Teacher:

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole attendance policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, students and parents.
- To ensure that challenging but achievable targets are set to reduce absence.

Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance

- To liaise with Heads of Year
- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To oversee the work of administrative staff.
- To ensure that attendance targets are set and reviewed.
- To report to Senior Leadership Team on attendance matters.
- To meet and liaise with EWO.
- To raise students causing concern at the Inclusion Team Meetings

Heads of Year:

- To collate and analyse attendance data for the year group.
- To oversee the morning registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and on time.
- To reinforce good practice at Year Team meetings.
- To ensure that tutors are rewarding students for good or improved attendance.
- To organise attendance assemblies.
- To initiate contact with parents in cases of prolonged unexplained absence.
- To liaise with the Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance as appropriate.
- To plan for the return of long-term absentees in conjunction with the Inclusion Team

Form Tutor

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- To follow-up immediately any unexplained non-attendance with students or refer to the attendance officer for further support in identifying reasons for absence.
- To give all students who are late a 10 minute same day detention.
- To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence
- To display information on attendance each week and talk to form groups about attendance issues.
- To record all reasons for absence in the register.
- To inform Heads of Year of concerns.
- To initiate meetings with families and other agencies where there are concerns regarding attendance.
- To reward and acknowledge improved attendance through the reward system.

Education Welfare Service:

When working with parents the Education Welfare Service can:

- Assist parents and students with problems which may affect school attendance
- Provide a communication link between home and school
- Help parents to understand their legal responsibilities and rights within the Education system
- Advise parents who to contact within the LA for specialised assistance
- Refer to other agencies where there are specific needs and concerns

When working with the school the Education Welfare Service can:-

- Regularly revise the school registers
- Liaise with identified school staff
- On receipt of a detailed referral, undertake home visits, either pre-arranged or without notice as considered necessary.
- Where necessary instigate legal proceedings on behalf of the LA including parental prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court and if deemed appropriate we will apply for Education Supervision Orders through the Family Court.
- Plan and review casework.
- Provide feedback to schools.
- Offer strategic/policy advice and support in relation to matters of attendance, the employment of young people and young people involved in approved activities.
- Support schools in the management and promotion of improving school attendance.
- Support schools in the use of penalty notices and parenting contracts within the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Attendance Administrator

- The Attendance Administrator will deal with the day-to-day running of the absence policy in regular liaison with the Senior Leader responsible for attendance.
- Initiate telephone contact to explain absences – first day absence.
- Maintain all registers - checking for accuracy and identifying concerns.
- Feed all attendance concerns into the Inclusion Team Meetings or to the attention of Heads of Year
- Produce weekly reports for all Heads of Year and tutors to identify patterns of attendance and to ensure that all unauthorised absence is tackled by pastoral teams.
- Supply attendance figures on a weekly and termly basis to all pastoral staff and half termly to the Local Authority
- Report to the Senior Leader where there are registers that are not taken in accordance with school policy or any issues related to attendance that cannot be resolved.

Triggers for intervention

<95% Tutor speaks to the pupil re: concerns in the tutor period
<92% Tutor phones home and records the conversation on the communication log
<90% The attendance officer sends a letter home to inform that attendance has reached a critical level and no more illness will be authorised without medical evidence
<88% Head of Year phones home and organises a meeting with parents
85% Attendance officer sends a letter to say that the attendance is at a level where the EWO is likely to be involved unless there is an immediate improvement
<85% EWO involvement and warning issued
<80% EWO meets parents and now continues to prosecution.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Improvement in overall School attendance figure to raise it above 95%
- Reduction in persistent absentees to below 10%
- Home is contacted by the Attendance Officer on the first day of absence
- Home is contacted by the EWO after 3 days continuous unexplained absences
- ALL pupils below 90% attendance (authorised or unauthorised absence) will be tracked and monitored for improvement and where necessary, action will be taken
- To have 100% registration (am/pm registration and every lesson)
- Good/improved attendance is rewarded
- All registers are taken within 10 minutes of the start of a lesson.