



Midsomer Norton Primary School Attendance Policy

'Learning for Life'

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school'.

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2013

Midsomer Norton Primary School expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved. There is clear evidence that absence from school is linked to lower levels of attainment; therefore, at Midsomer Norton Primary School, we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance for all pupils.

Overall Aims:

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality:

The Legal Framework:

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register
- The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance.

Head Teacher:

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with B&NES policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with B&NES Local Authority policies and procedures.

Deputy Head Teacher:

- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquires.
- To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the School Business Manager to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the Children Missing Education Officer and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.

School Business Manager (SBM)

- To manage office staff in carrying out and recording the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school and when no reason has been received.
- To monitor weekly attendance data for their year groups.
- To promptly inform the DHT, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
- To produce weekly/termly/yearly data for DHT/SMT/SLT to analyse.
- To ensure reasons for absence are recorded and class registers updated.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.

Staff:

- To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- **To complete the daily class attendance/punctuality register, with the pupils twice a day by 9:00am and 1:20pm**
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- **To promptly inform the DHT, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.**
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

Parents:

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. **If a child has a minor illness parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them.** If pupils' have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know. Pupils' should be brought child back to school after appointments. **Pupils should miss as little time as possible.**

Therefore, parents are expected to:

- **Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.**
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- Telephone/ text to inform the school on the first day of absence for their child.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

The Local Authority, through the Children Missing Education Officer, is expected to:

- Support the school in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions, e.g. CMEO involvement

Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:

Weekly Celebration Assemblies/ School Newsletter

The 3 classes with the best attendance will be celebrated in our weekly celebration assembly and in our weekly newsletter.

Staff Promoting Good Attendance

It is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated.

End of Term Attendance Rewards

At the end of each term there is a special reward for children who have achieved attendance at 100% for that term. The DHT and the School Business manager organise and lead on the end of term attendance incentives.

Attendance Certificate

Children with 97%+ attendance, receive a special attendance certificate, signed by the Head Teacher to take home and keep. Certificates are presented each half term, to reward those who achieve excellent attendance.

Only pupils achieving 100% attendance and 6 lates or fewer for the whole school year, are eligible for the end of year reward.

Sharing attendance data

Pupils are informed on a weekly basis of attendance/punctuality achievements. The class achieving the highest attendance/punctuality, and the number of pupils achieving 97% -100% attendance are shared in termly assemblies.

This develops healthy competition between year groups to improve attendance. It also engages the class teacher in conversation with their classes about attendance.

Procedures to monitor attendance

Monitoring First Day Absence

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made. The office staff follow this system:

1. Text parents' contact number(s).
2. Make a follow up phonecall during the first morning of absence if no response has been received.
3. Update SIMS where a reason has been given for an absence.

Reviewing absence/ punctuality

Attendance is reviewed weekly and termly by the Head teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and School Business Manager.

An advisory letter is sent to parents of children whose attendance is a concern if:

Attendance is below 95% with no explanations given for absence

Attendance is below 90% and insufficient explanation/ documentation has been given for persistent absence (eg Doctor's note).

If attendance does not improve a referral is made to the Children Missing Education Officer and a letter sent to the parents informing them of this step.

Authorised Absence

By law, only the school can approve absence, not parents. The circumstances of each particular case are considered individually. The school considers the following factors:

- The nature of the event
- Its frequency, i.e. is it a 'one-off' event?
- Whether advance notification is given
- The child's attendance record including any holiday leave

Agreed absences in advance are likely to include:

- Illness, and medical or dental appointments, although these are encouraged to be taken out of school time
- Days set aside for religious observance in the religious body to which the parents belong
- Special circumstances such as family bereavement
- Visits to a new school
- Off-site activities i.e. music examinations, special tuition

No leave of absence for Year 6 pupils will be granted during the week of statutory assessment tests in May. For year 2 children this will be the whole month of May.

Penalty Notices

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.

If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.

'Parent' includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

Date agreed by the Governing Body: 19th July 2016

Policy to be reviewed in July 2017