

Hoo St Werburgh
Primary School

&

The
Marlborough



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Attendance and Punctuality Policy

November 2024

Signatories

Head of School	Mrs Lo Boffa	
Executive Head	Mrs E Poad	
Chair of Governors	Mrs A Costidell	

Members of Staff Responsible:

Mrs L Boffa	Head of School
Mrs M Pace	DSL Lead & Pastoral Welfare Officer
Mrs C Titterton	Attendance Officer
Mrs L Kennet	Head of School – The Marlborough
Mrs K Spiers	DSL Lead – The Marlborough

Review	
Dated	November 2024
Next Review	2 Years – November 2026

Introduction

Hoo St Werburgh Primary School & The Marlborough recognises that good attendance is central to raising standards and pupil attainment.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind.

For your children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless there is an unavoidable reason for absence.

Having a good education will help give your child the best possible start in life. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Children with poor attendance have trouble feeling included within school life and tend to have difficulties forming friendships.

By law all children of compulsory school age must get a suitable, full-time education. It is the parent's responsibility for making sure that their child attends regularly and on time.

The school is committed to working with parents and pupils as we believe that this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. The minimum expected level of attendance for any child at our school is 96%. Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling. We continually monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. We will keep parents updated regularly on their child's progress.

This Policy operates in accordance with the framework and advice contained within the Medway guidance on achieving and maintaining high attendance, which the school and its Governing Body intend to follow.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. The school has a high level of expectation to optimise the pupil's achievement during their school life.

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

School Expectations and Actions

Attendance Percentage	Actions that may be taken
Telephone call/Attendance Overview Letter Stage 1	• Logged phone call evidenced on file • Pupil's attendance will be monitored regularly by the Attendance Officer and Pastoral Welfare Manager

Medical Evidence Stage 2	• Parents/Carer informed by letter • Pupil's attendance will be monitored regularly by the Attendance Officer, Pastoral Welfare Manager • Pupil will be refused any further authorised absence and Parent/Carer asked to provide written evidence of illness/absence
Attendance Contract Stage 3	• Parents/Carer invited to attend an Attendance Contract meeting with the Attendance Officer, Pastoral Welfare Manager & Attendance Advisory Practitioner • Attendance Contract Agreement drawn up between school, parent/carers and pupil • Pupil's attendance will be monitored regularly by the Attendance Officer, Pastoral Welfare Manager,
Notice to Improve Stage 4	• Pupil's attendance remains a cause for concern • Notice to Improve issued by the Head of School with specific timescale for significant improvement in attendance
Referral to LA AAP Stage 5	• A formal referral to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner, advising them that the pupil's attendance has not improved. This may result in issue of a penalty notice or prosecution by the Local Authority.

A pupil becomes a persistent absentee (PA) when they fall below 90% attendance, no matter the reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need the parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

To help to achieve this, the school will:

- report to parents their child's attendance with each school report.
- contact parents should their child's attendance fall below the school's minimum expectation of 96%

It is a legal requirement for the school to report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to parents in the annual Governors Report and to the Department of Education.

We expect the parent to:

- notify the school on the first day of absence before 8.50am, with a reason, when their child is unable to attend
- keep the school informed if the absence is continuing so that work can be sent home and so that the school can prepare for the child's return
- provide a note indicating attendance for medical appointments before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen
- provide up to date contact numbers and change of address

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent or you know they will be late it is parental responsibility to inform us on the **first day of absence, before 8.50am**. This can be done by telephoning the school on 01634 338 040 and leaving a message or by the following methods:

- **preferably** on Studybugs
- at the school office
- on parent mail

If your child is absent and we have not been notified by 8.50am, we will telephone you to ascertain the child's whereabouts and reason for absence. If we are unable to speak to our Priority 1 contact we will leave a message where possible. We will continue to telephone further contacts provided, until we are able to confirm that a child is safe.

If we are unable to confirm a child's safety by 11am on day 2 (as this then becomes a safeguarding concern) we will take further action to ensure that we know that the child is safe and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. A home visit will be made if appropriate and the police may be asked to complete a welfare check

The Marlborough children only - it is parental responsibility to report any absence or lateness, **please do not leave messages with the drivers/couriers** to pass on.

Promoting Regular Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, they miss instructions and vital information, 1:1 sessions or small group work individualised for the child. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons and can be embarrassing for the child. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

To help to achieve this, the school will:

- encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality
- provide you with advice and support if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.
- try to facilitate the collection of children where parents have temporary transport problems if possible.
- contact the parent if their child regularly arrives after 9.am unaccompanied and offer support to get them to school on time each day
- refer pupils with repeated, unexplained or persistent lateness after 9.05am without an acceptable reason to the AAP as this is an unauthorised late mark.

We expect the parent to:

- ensure that their child arrives at school on time and ready to learn (this means having breakfast before school) each day
- let the school know if their child is going to be late
- understand the importance of punctuality and promote this with their child
- **The Marlborough Children only** – ensure their child is ready and waiting for their minibus/tax

Lateness Procedure

The school gates open at **8.35am** and are closed at 9.00am promptly. If your child arrives after 9.00am then they will need to enter the school via the school office where their time of arrival and reason for lateness is recorded.

At **9.00 am** the registers officially close. If they arrive between 9.00am and 9.05am then they will be coded 'L' late mark.

In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after 9.05am they will receive a 'U' unauthorised late mark. If your child is going to be late it is parental responsibility to inform us as soon as possible. This can be done by leaving a message:

- **preferably** on Studybugs
- or at the school office from 8am
- on Parentmail

The Marlborough children – Please note that we are aware your child will be coming into school on a minibus/taxi and as a result lateness due to traffic is taken into consideration.

Granting Approval for Term Time Absence

The Department of Education (DfE) and Local Authority states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances

Parents/carers cannot authorise any absence, only the Headteacher can do this. However parents/carers can provide reasons for absence for the school to consider

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. **All requests need to be submitted in writing to Head of School or Head of Specialist Provision.**

Should you choose to remove your child during term time without authorisation you are not only disrupting your child's education but are also at risk of receiving a penalty fine.

From August 2024, the DfE amended the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 so that each parent/carer who receives their first Penalty Notice for taking their child out of school during term time has to pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. Please be aware, non-payment of penalty notices, may result in prosecution.

Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a Penalty Notice. In this instance, a 'Notice to Improve' notification will not be issued beforehand.

We are, by law required to comply with these amendments to the regulations, which affect all absences from school during term time taken after 1st September 2024.

Thank you for your continuing support in this important matter

Unauthorised Absences

If your child incurs 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in rolling ten week period (this includes O"s" & U"s") a referral will automatically be made to AASSA and a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent/carer within the household. You will receive a £80.00 fine, increasing to £160.00 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the fine will result in a court prosecution for your child's non-school attendance

Penalty Notices

- First offence - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- Second Offence (within 3 years) - the second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Medical Appointments

The school must be informed in advance of any medical appointments, unless it is an emergency. To cause the least disruption to your child's education we encourage parents to arrange any medical appointments outside school times eg before/after school, during school holidays or at break/lunchtimes. Written evidence must be provided whenever possible. If attendance is low then it is imperative that evidence is provided to prevent 'unauthorised' absence being recorded.

Parents must collect their children and bring them back in again when attending appointments during the school day. Parents should come to the office, where the office staff will contact the classroom and ask that the child comes down to reception to meet their parent/carer. The school will sign the child out and then back in again when they return.

If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless evidence has been provided and it has been agreed by the school.

Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be coded by school (see 'understanding the attendance codes' below), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- keeping children off school unnecessarily
- another member of the family is ill or has a medical appointment
- parent cannot get the child to school
- the child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained or requested
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children, or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

- your child attends a medical/dental appointment for more than half a day without written proof that this is necessary
- the weather is bad
- the family have overslept, had a late night or a bad night's sleep
- there are problems with uniform/clothing

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we can work with that family; we can offer support within school via our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Welfare Manager. In addition we can use outside agencies to help if required, such as the School Nurse or the Attendance Advisory Practitioner.

Understanding The Attendance Codes

The method of maintaining the class registers is through the SIMS Attendance Module. Class teachers complete a registration sheet twice daily and return it to the office. Reasons for absence are recorded using the relevant codes shown below.

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)

The Law

By law, all children of compulsory school age must get a suitable, full-time education. As a parent, you are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements which provide a suitable full-time education.

Once your child is registered at a school you are responsible for making sure he or she attends regularly. If your child fails to attend regularly – even if they miss school without you knowing – you are committing an offence and the Local Authority (LA) may take legal action against you.

The LA may decide to prosecute a parent if this happens:

- Parents can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
- Magistrates can also impose a Parenting Order, which means that the parent has to attend a counselling and guidance programme, usually a parenting class.
- A penalty notice of £80 may be issued (by the LA, school or police) as an alternative to prosecution. This rises to £160 if unpaid after 28 days. Failure to pay will normally lead to prosecution.

Summary

The Headteacher, Head of Specialist Provision and the Governing Body are responsible for this policy and its implementation. The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

Further information can be found at

www.medway.gov.uk/info/200164/school_information/358/school_attendance/2

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-schoolattendance>

- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)'
- DfE 'Children missing education'
- DfE 'Providing remote education'
- DfE(2024) 'Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

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