

NEW MARSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL **WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Introduction

New Marston Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a target of 96% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Aims and Objectives

- Improve pupils' achievements by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with medical issues or exceptional circumstances.
- Ensure that our policy applies also to the foundation aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Registration

- All the school doors should be open at 8:45am until 8:55am. This is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.
- Morning registration must be completed by the class teacher at **9:00am (Years 1 – 6)** and **9:10am** for **Foundation Stage**. The registers will remain open for **30 minutes**.
- The afternoon registration will be at **1:05pm**. The afternoon registers will close at **1:20pm**.
- Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed.
- Each class teacher is has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance on Integris.
- Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being either authorised (/ \), late after register closed (L), late after register closed, as an approved educational activity (V) (attendance out of school) or (N) no reason yet provided for absence.
- In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.
- Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as (N) no reason yet provided for absence. The Truancy call system will then identify all the pupils with (N) marks and a phone call will be sent out to their parents. The parents will have the option to either leave a voicemail message, if they are 'aware' of the absence or be connected to the school if they are unaware of the absence. The truancy calls will only stop if a reason for absence has been provided.
- All attendance records are documented using the Integris software, which is supported by the Local Authority.

Lateness

- Once the doors are closed at 8:55am, the only way to get into school is via the school office.
- Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close. If your child is late to school, it is the parent's/carer's responsibility to sign the late book at the school office. A reason for lateness must be provided.
- Any child who arrives for school later than 9:25am (Years 1-6) and 9:40am (Foundation) will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U)
- Children who have attended a medical appointment and arrive later than 9:05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Parents/carers whose Children are persistently late i.e. 3 or more lates per half term, will receive a late letter advising them about the schools concerns. The school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support/advice from the Attendance Team.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Ensure that their registers are completed accurately and on time, both in the morning and afternoon.
- Reporting unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parent/carers.
- Informing the Attendance Officer/Headteacher/Attendance Team where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted on Integris or reported to the Attendance Officer.
- Discussing attendance/ lateness issues at Parents evenings where necessary.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance. Liaising with the School Governors and Attendance Team and coming up with initiatives to address attendance concerns.
- Identifying trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Work with the Attendance Team when contacting families, where concerns are raised about absence, including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

The Attendance Team are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Ensuring the Absence/Late book is completed.
- Contacting parents/carers of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers and reporting concerns to the Home School Link Worker/Headteacher.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.
- Providing rewards for good attendance for individuals and classes.

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness, medical appointments or an exceptional circumstance.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence via telephone (01865 761560) or email (office.2529@new-marston.oxon.sch.uk).
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments that may occur in school time.
- Every effort must be made to ensure medical appointments are made outside of school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor/ dentist/

hospital. This can be either a text reminder, email, appointment card, letter or a prescription.

- Making an appointment with the Headteacher for requests regarding absences during term time. Where possible, this should be at least 2 weeks before the time off is required.

Absence from School

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer, e.g. if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the reason.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised.
- Parents do not have the authority to authorise absences therefore not all absences supported by parents will be recorded as authorised.
- The reason provided must be deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission from the school.

e.g.

- Taking the rest of the day off before or after a medical appointment
- Taking a long weekend
- Family holiday
- Family celebration
- Oversleeping
- Shopping or visit to the hairdresser
- Day trip to a theme park
- Birthday treat

Therefore if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Unexplained absence

- If no reason for a child's absence is received, an unexplained absence form will be generated from
- Integris for parents/carers to complete.
- If the letter is not completed and returned by the specified date, the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Persistent unexplained absences will be followed up by the Attendance Team.

Illness

- If a child will be absent for more than 4 days, parent/carer must liaise with the school, so the school can send work home.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will liaise with parents/carers to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given home tuition outside school/or attend the hospital school.
- If a child has repeated periods of illness during the academic year, the school will ask parents/carers to provide medical evidence. This evidence could be a doctor's note,

appointment card or a copy of a prescription. The school may seek written permission from parents/carers, so we can have permission to speak to the doctors/medical professionals in order to make our own enquiries.

Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits;
- Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education off site;
- Most types of dual registration.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

Religious Observance

A maximum of 2 school days (per academic year) can be authorised by the Headteacher for Religious observances. A 'time off for exceptional circumstance' form must be completed.

Absence Procedure.

First Day Absence

- Parents should contact the school office by 9:30am either by phone (01865 761560) or email (office.2529@new-marston.oxon.sch.uk)
- Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent/carer, the first day contact process will be initiated.
- The attendance team will check all of the registers from 9:00am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent.
- When the school is unaware why the child is absent, our Truancy call system will send a call out to parents listed on Integris.
- The Attendance team will check the Truancy call system for any messages, and transfer any messages/information onto the registers (Integris).
- The Attendance team will liaise with the Headteacher about the correct codes to record in the register and ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed.

Second Day Absence

- If a child who is under child protection does not attend school for 2 days and no reason given social services need to be informed (please see safeguarding policy)

Third Day Absence

- If the child is still away and there has been no contact from the parents, the school will try and contact the other contacts on the child's admission forms.
- Written communication will be sent to the parents asking them to contact the school as soon as possible.
- The Home School Link Worker may do a home visit.

Continuing Absence

- The school will continue to try and get in contact with the parents via telephone, email or letters.
- The MASH team will also be contacted.

Ten Day Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to Oxfordshire County Council which is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action they have taken.

Absence Notes

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Frequent Absence (Attendance concerns)

Attendance concerns

- It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career.
- It is the responsibility of the Head teacher and the governors to support good attendance, and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly.
- It is the responsibility of the attendance team to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.
- In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s.
- Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this attendance is still a cause for concern, there will be opportunities for the parents/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance.
- When a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time, the school will call parents in for a meeting with the Attendance Team/ Home School Link Worker.
- If no improvements are made, a parental contract will be put in place and monitored for 4 weeks. If there is still no improvement after 2 parental contracts a referral to the Education Welfare Service (Oxfordshire County Council) will be made.
- The Education Welfare Service (Oxfordshire County Council) may issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral to the ESW from the school as part of the schools processes to address poor attendance.

Penalty Notices and Legal Action

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable -

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a referral to the County Attendance Team to issue a fine or take further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A parent/carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;
- they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation; they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. PA cases maybe referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

Early Arrivals to school

Parents/carers are responsible for their child before 8:45am (KS1 and KS2) and 9:00am (Foundation). If your child attend breakfast club you must hand your child to a member of the New Marston Primary School Breakfast club staff. Parents must ensure they have been signed

in on the register. Breakfast club runs from 8am, no child should be dropped off before this time, as no staff are available.

Collecting at the end of the school day

All children need to be collected by an adult named on their school admission form. If your child needs to be collected by another adult, you must notify the school office in advanced. If your child is in the Foundation a password will need to be given.

All children from Foundation up to Year 4 should be brought/collected from school by an adult. If your child is in Year 5 or 6 (ONLY) you must provide the school with written permission, to say you are happy for your child to walk to/from school by themselves.

Early collection from School

Children are expected to be in school from 8:45am (KS1 and KS2) 9:00am (Foundation) until 3:15pm. Any time missed at school has an impact on your child's learning. It also causes disruption to the class.

- Children should only leave school early if it is for an exceptional circumstance. Leaving school early should not be a regular occurrence.
- If your child needs to leave school before 3:15pm, parents/carers MUST call the school office directly either by phone or email.
- If your child needs to leave early due to a medical appointment, proof of the appointment should be given to the office. This may be an email confirmation, a text message or a letter.
- If no documentation is provided, the school may ask to contact the medical service for confirmation.
- If collections are regular (more than 2 times in 6 weeks), a meeting with the Attendance Team may be required.

Late collection from school

Parents/carers are responsible from collecting their child from school at 3:15pm, unless their child is attending an afterschool club.

Parents are responsible for contacting the school before 3:15pm, if their child will be picked up late. If a parent fails to collect their child by 3:25pm, they will be brought to the school office. At 3:30pm all children who are still sat at the school office will be sent to Kid Active (An OFSTED registered afterschool club run by an outside agency). Please be aware you will be charged by Kid Active, if you child has to attend.

If any safeguarding issues are suspected, the relevant safeguarding procedures will be followed. This is also relevant for children who are collected very late from school.

Leave of Absence

As of 1st September 2013, the Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Parents/carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence period in question.

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

Any requests for time-off can be refused if your child's attendance is below the school target of 96% for the whole academic year.

Promoting Attendance

- The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.
- The Headteacher will promote the importance of good attendance at admission meetings.
- Class teachers will discuss attendance at Parents' evenings.

Attendance Awards

The school will use the following, to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance:-

- 100% attendance certificates and raffle prizes will be awarded termly.
- The class with the highest attendance each week will be presented with S.A.M the School Attendance Matters teddy bear. The class with the highest attendance each term will receive a gift voucher to spend on resources for their class.
- The class with the least number of lates each term will receive a gift voucher to spend on resources for their class.
- Certificates for attendance improvements will be awarded, where appropriate.

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

The school target for attendance for 2015/2016 academic year was at least 96%. This target will remain the same for the 2016/2017 academic year.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

Date agreed: September 2016 **Kelly Daniels (Attendance Officer)**
Kate Stratford (Home School Link Worker)
Hannah Brown (Headteacher)

Date for review: September 2017