



Mendell Primary School

Aspire Challenge Achieve

Attendance Procedure – May 2023

Parent and Carer Guide

At Mendell Primary we put great emphasis on good attendance and punctuality. Good school attendance is crucial for children's social development and essential for their academic progress and achievement. Poor attendance can affect children's ability to make and keep friendships; a vital part of growing up.

We want all of our children to achieve to the best of their potential and they cannot do this if they are not in school every day. They should only be absent from school when it is absolutely necessary. Setting good attendance patterns from an early age, from nursery through primary school will also help your child later on in their life. Pupils with no absence are 2.2 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*- C or equivalent including English and mathematics.

Absences

If your child is absent from school please inform the school office directly as soon as possible either via telephone, 0151334 1432 email, schooloffice@mendell.wirral.sch.uk or calling in to school in-person. It is a legal requirement for parents/carers to inform school of the reason for a child's absence. Please make sure that all absence is kept to a minimum and your child returns to school as soon as they are well enough. School will telephone parents and carers to advise that their child is not in school and no reason for absence has been given. School may also telephone any other persons on the pupil's contact list if they are unable to make contact with the parent. Failure to inform school of the reasons will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised' and will appear as such on the child's annual report. Parents may receive a home welfare visit from either school staff or Merseyside Police in order to ensure the safety of you and your child. Unauthorised absences can also result in an Education Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority. If you have any worries/concerns, please do not hesitate to get in contact with the school so we can offer our support. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parent and carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. Covering up gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. It is this type of absence which can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings and can include:

- Holiday not authorised by the school (Code G)
- Reason for absence not yet provided (Code N)
- Absent from school without authorisation (Code O)
- Arrival in school after registration closed 9:30am (Code U)

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) is when a pupil misses 10% or more of their schooling across the full school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing great harm and parent's and pupil's complete support is needed to address this. Schools will give priority to any pupil either at the PA level or at danger of reaching

it and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately so that together a plan can be agreed and put in place to get that child back into school.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Children need to be in school by 8:50am each day. It is important that all children make a good start to the day and are ready to learn. If a child arrives after this time but before 9:30am (when registers close) they will be given a late mark, L. Children who arrive late are often embarrassed and may not be in the best frame of mind to begin learning. They may also miss out on something important from the start of their lesson. If children arrive after 9:30am (when registers close) they will be marked with a U, this means they are present on site, but will not count as a present mark in law and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This also means that you may face the possibility of an Education Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Any pupil arriving late must enter the school through the main entrance and be signed-in in accordance with the school's attendance policy. Children should (unless in years 5 or 6 and have permission) be brought to school by a parent/carer each morning. They should be accompanied to the school office where a reason for the lateness can be given to staff. For unaccompanied year 5 and 6 children, parents and carers will be contacted to inform them of their child's lateness and for the reason.

If lateness becomes a regular occurrence it will be treated in the same way as unauthorised absence and parents and carers will be contacted and may be invited in to school to discuss the reasons.

Stepped Interventions

92.6% - 95%	Early Warning	If your child's attendance falls in to this bracket, the class teacher will have a meeting with you by either phone call or face to face to discuss the impact of absence on your child's learning and the reasons for absence, to offer any support and to set targets for your child's attendance to improve. These will be recorded by class teachers on our internal recording system and tagging in our attendance officer.
90% - 92.5%	School Monitoring and Intervention	If your child's attendance falls into this bracket, you will receive a letter of concern from school to advise we are monitoring attendance to seek for improvements to be made and offer support if there is an issue. The Attendance Officer will then be in touch to assess if any further support is needed. School will require medical evidence of illness at this stage e.g. prescription label, text from Doctor with appointment details, appointment card from the walk in centre in order for your child's absence to be marked as an illness.
90% and below (Persistent Absence)	Attendance Service and School Intervention	If your child's attendance falls into this bracket, you will attend a panel meeting with the Head Teacher and/or Attendance Officer. Other persons may also be invited e.g. Local authority attendance officer, school nurse

		and/or school governors. You may also receive Education Penalty Warning from LA / Penalty notice (fine) This could also lead to prosecution.
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We understand that in the Autumn term the percentages may seem higher as there will have been fewer days to the school year. Therefore, Autumn term meetings and contacts will be supportive to highlight the issue and offer any support that may be needed.

Unauthorised attendance that falls below 75% are classed as extremely persistently absent and this can be an underlying risk factor and indicative of a safeguarding concern. All of the above should be underpinned by the offer of ongoing support to address identified difficulties. All pupils under 50% are classed as severely persistently absent and must have a plan to support their attendance.

Education Penalty Notices

The Local Authority issues Education Penalty Notices by post. Payment of an Education Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after this time but within 28 days. Education Penalty Notices are issued separately to each parent in respect of each child. A possible exception to this would be where parents are separated and one parent has taken a child on unauthorised leave of absence without the knowledge / consent of the other parent.

The Local Authority retains any revenue from the Education Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs. Non-payment of an Education Penalty Notice will result in the withdrawal of the Notice, and would normally trigger prosecution proceedings at Magistrates Court under Section 444 Education Act 1996. There is no right of appeal by parents and carers against an Education Penalty Notice.

Medical Appointments

If a child needs a doctor or dental appointment, parents are asked to avoid appointments during school hours. If this is not possible, parents and carers should make sure that children are in school for their morning and afternoon session mark; if they do need to leave school during the day, please make sure that they are back in school as soon as possible afterwards. Medical evidence is required to support your reason for absence and to ensure the registers can be marked correctly. School will accept the following as medical evidence: Doctor's certificate, Appointment card - date stamped, Medication in the name of the child, Prescription, Text message from doctors or NHS confirming an appointment, Care of the chemist – date stamped slip to show medical advice has been sought, Appointment letters from hospital, doctor or dentist. This is not an exhaustive list. In some cases, schools may need to ask parents and carers about getting the School Nurse involved and/or a Doctor if there are particular concerns about health-related absences.

Expectations:

Pupils are expected:

- To do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually;
- To promptly arrive in class for both morning and afternoon register;
- To inform a trusted adult if there is a reason they are not happy to attend school;
- Older children to be aware of their attendance targets and work towards meeting them.

A parent and carer's responsibilities are:

- To ensure children attend school every day;
- To trust that school staff will contact parents and carers during the school day if a child is ill in school and needs to go home;
- To ensure that school have more than one set of contact details and that these are kept updated;
- To ensure that their child is collected on time at the end of the school day;
- To work closely with the school to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance;
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Parents and Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and is in school for every lesson after they have registered. Parents and carers may be issued with an Education Penalty Notice or prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually.

Class teachers are expected to be responsible for:

- 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
- Informing the Attendance Leader where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Discussing pupil attendance at Parents' evenings

The Attendance Officer is expected to be responsible for:

- Liaising with the Local Authority
- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Making first day response calls to parents of absent children where no contact has been received.
- Informing the Attendance Lead / Designated Safeguarding Lead of any cases where the explanation for absence gives potential cause for concern and where additional support or intervention may be required.
- Recording details of children who arrive late and tracking/supporting an improvement in punctuality.
- Sending out letters and emails to parents regarding attendance concerns.
- Reporting daily and weekly attendance figures.
- Keeping an overview of whole school, class, and individual attendance rates, looking particularly at overall absence, levels of unauthorised absence, and patterns of absence.
- Analysing attendance for different groups of children e.g PP, LAC, SEN etc.
- Submitting Fixed Penalty Notices.
- Liaising with external agencies when necessary such as school advisory service, Caritas etc.

The Attendance Leader is expected to be responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised

- Seek advice from the Attendance Service
- Providing reports and background info to inform discussion with the Locality Attendance Officer
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence
- Analysis of Attendance data to identify trends over time for whole school, year groups, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups

Celebrating good attendance

It is important that schools recognise and celebrate good and improved attendance. This can be done in a variety of ways. At Mendell Primary we consulted our parents/carers and children as to what ways we could celebrate and encourage good attendance and the following was thought up:

- Weekly whole school assembly to celebrate class attendance through our “classopoly” display. Classes can move around the board gaining prizes as they go. The higher their attendance the more spaces they can move. Please see appendix 14.
- Weekly certificates given to individual children on an individual basis. For example, improved attendance or punctuality. Better attitude to or taking more responsibility for own attendance etc. Please see appendix 15.
- Termly certificates for 100%, 99% and 98% attendance. This re-sets each term, so if a child is absent in the Autumn term for example then they could still achieve 100% in the other 2 terms. Please see appendix 16.
- Termly certificates for 100% punctuality. This also re-sets each term, so if a child is late in the Autumn term for example then they could still achieve 100% in the other 2 terms. Please see appendix 17.
- End of year prizes for 100% attendance and/or punctuality for the whole year. These are chosen by the children each year.

Locality Attendance Officers from the Authority’s Attendance Service are happy to send positive letters to parents to recognise and reinforce progress made in terms of securing their child’s attendance. School can also invite Locality Attendance Officers to be involved in celebration assemblies.

Holidays in Term Time

Changes in Government Regulations mean that, as of 1st September 2013, there is no entitlement for parents to withdraw their children for authorised leave of absence in term time. Head Teachers can only grant leave of absence during term-time if there are ‘**exceptional circumstances**’ surrounding the request, **and** parents have made **an application at least 2 weeks in advance**. If a Head Teacher is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to warrant the granting of leave of absence, the Head Teacher will then determine the number of school days a child can be away from school.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of the agreed number of days, will be classed as unauthorised absence, and may result in a fine and the issue of Education Penalty Notices by the Local Authority.

We appreciate your support with attendance and are available to help and support you as needed. Please contact our Attendance Officer, Lyndsey Jones, via phone 0151 334 1432 or email, schooloffice@mendell.wirral.sch.uk.