

DERBYSHIRE LA

MELBOURNE INFANT SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy was reviewed March 2020 and has been impact assessed in the light of all other school policies including the Disability Equality Scheme.

Reviewed March 2020

Signed : Dated

Chair of Governors

Minute No :

Introduction

At Melbourne Infant School we place great importance on high attendance for pupils. We believe that an effective attendance policy will contribute to the general welfare of the children and help them to meet the challenging targets for achievement set by the school.

Although the head teacher has overall responsibility for attendance issues, all members of the school community will work together to promote excellent attendance.

Aim

The overall attendance figure for 2018-2019 was 97.52% which was above the target of 97%. In line with Derbyshire LA's target we aim to achieve again for 2019/2020 97%.

Attendance policy into practice

1. Attendance registers are marked according to national and local guidelines each morning and afternoon at the start of the session via RM Integris. Office staff then check registers and input absences.
2. Parents are requested to inform school about any absence on the first morning. The message is recorded and transmitted to the relevant teacher/s.
3. If a parent has failed to contact the school on the first day of absence, the class teacher will inform the office staff who will telephone the parent or other family member. Should this be unsuccessful, a letter will be sent to parents so that the absence can be explained.
4. The School Business Officer/ Business Assistant and the head teacher monitor absence throughout the term, looking for regular patterns of absence, unauthorised absence and long-term absence. Particular attention is paid to vulnerable groups of children to ensure attendance is not falling below that of other children.
5. If the Headteacher is concerned about a child's attendance parents may be contacted.
6. Where attendance falls below 90% parents/carers will be informed via a letter and ask to work with the school to improve the child's attendance. If attendance does not improve, the LA parental responsibility letter will be sent to inform the parent/carer that legal action may be taken. The school will then continue to follow the LA guidance (see flowchart – Appendix A).

Responsibilities

The Head Teacher

- Has overall responsibility for attendance issues
- Ensures that electronic system is updated
- Monitors attendance
- Keeps teachers, parents and governors informed about attendance issues
- Report attendance trends and information about groups of children's attendance to governors e.g. disadvantaged, SEND, persistence absents.

Class Teacher

- Responsible for completing the register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions to meet legal requirements and comply with fire regulations. Children should be entered as present, absent or late. Absences should be marked as authorised or unauthorised. (see definitions below) If it is unclear whether an absence should be authorised, the head teacher should make the decision.
- Monitor attendance on a day-to-day basis and inform head teacher of any concerns.

School Business Officer/ Business Assistant

- Enters data into MIS system (RM Integrus)
- Monitors absence, liaising with head
- Follows up unexplained absences on first day
- Records late arrivals after register has closed (after 9.05 am)

Parents/Carers

- Have a statutory duty to ensure regular attendance and punctuality.
- Inform school on the first day of absence
- If intending to request a Leave of Absence in term time, fill in a Leave of Absence request form before making arrangements and at least two weeks in advance of the requested dates.
- Keep school informed of any health, social or emotional issues that may affect their child's well-being and attendance.

Main Categories of Authorised Absence

- Sickness
- Medical or dental appointments, if by necessity made in school time
- Domestic circumstances that could include death of a close relative, house fire or other traumatic event.
- Leave of Absence in term time – only exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised Absence

- Truancy-where the child is away from school without permission from an authorised person. A parent is not an authorised person and the school may refuse to authorise absences. (For example, shopping expeditions, birthday treats, unauthorised Leave of Absence)
- Late after the register has closed, this will be ten minutes after the register has closed. Close of register will be 9.05 am.

Attendance Strategies

- The importance of good attendance will be discussed at the meeting for new parents.
- A clear statement in school brochure about the high profile given to the issue of attendance.
- Newsletters will be used to remind parents about the school policy and the rules about holidays in term time.
- Attendance will be reported on the school newsletter weekly to ensure parents understand the importance of children's attendance.
- Prompt investigation of any issues that may be affecting a child's well-being and attendance.

Holidays

The Department for Education expects schools and local authorities to promote good attendance and reduce absences, including persistent absence. This is because we know that missing out on lessons leaves children/young people vulnerable to falling behind. Children/young people with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary schools.

As a school we work incredibly hard to support all children/young people and their families so as to ensure that all children/young people have good attendance.

The Government has recently made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which come into force on **1st September 2013**. These state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during the term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; in these cases it is the Headteacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

As a consequence of these changes approval will not be given to requests for leave of absence for reasons that are not considered to be special or exceptional such as:

- Availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements
- Days overlapping with beginning or end of term

Parents needing leave of absence for **exceptional circumstances*** should complete a form at least two weeks before the anticipated start date. The reason for the request should be given in detail. Applications should be made before the leave is arranged as absences will not be granted retrospectively.

During Year 2 SATs and Year 1 Phonic Screening assessments no holiday shall be authorised – unless there are compassionate circumstances.

This is Government policy and parents who take their children on holiday without permission will incur unauthorised absences for their child. These remain on the child's record and will be monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Service. Parents could be issued with a fixed penalty notice and/or court action.

*Examples of **exceptional circumstances** as agreed by Melbourne Infant and Junior School's governors.

- Accredited Exam – ballet/music (extra curricular)
- Gifted & Talented opportunity (part in the pantomime, Wimbledon ball person etc)
- Bereavement
- Serious family crisis
- Holiday due to factory shut down (Proof shown to the school to verify from employer)
- Wedding – close family relative (parent, grandparent, sibling, 1st aunty/uncle)
- Religious Day
- Other exceptional circumstances to be considered on an individual basis

Reporting

Levels of authorised and unauthorised attendance published in School Profile.

Safeguarding

Any attendance issues which may be related to safeguarding and child protection issues will be followed up in accordance with the Child Protection Policy

Related Policies

Child Protection

S.E.N.

Behaviour, Anti-bullying, Equal Opportunities & Inclusion

February 2020

PENALTY NOTICE WORKFLOW

To be used in conjunction with the guidance notes for requesting the issue of a penalty notice.

Emerging Attendance Concern

- Identify a key worker where possible
- Undertake and record preventative work for 2 -6 weeks
- Best practise - attempt at least one pre-arranged home visit
- Ensure parent is informed of their parental responsibility either in person or by sending Parental Responsibility Letter

