



Attendance Policy

November 2025



Introduction:

At Moorhill Primary School, we are committed to working together to ensure all children receive the best education possible and to enable them to make progress and do as well as they can. For this to happen children clearly need to be in school. This policy aims to make clear what is expected of parents and children and to assure parents of our willingness to work positively with them if problems arise.

Responsibilities:

The Executive Headteacher, Mrs. L. Banks, has overall responsibility for attendance at the school. Mrs. T. West – our Attendance Champion, Miss. T. Fletcher & Mrs. J. Hayward, work alongside the Headteacher to take responsibility for the day to day running of the school's attendance system. We are legally required to complete attendance records accurately and on time, and class teachers ensure this is the case.

Principles:

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. The school will promote the importance of positive behaviour and good attendance through the curriculum and personal/social opportunities. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We will ensure that parents are aware of attendance matters as they relate to their child and work with them to ensure good attendance and punctuality.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a 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. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. The attendance policy includes procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils.

Moorhill Primary School employ VIP Education. They are an independent Education Welfare Company (EWO) who works with the school to raise attendance and deal with welfare matters. They will communicate with you if there is an issue they can support us with. Pupils' attendance will be monitored and contact details may be shared with VIP Education if it becomes a cause of concern. VIP are GDPR compliant and will not share personal data with a third party. Their privacy notice is available via our office.

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/Education-welfare/Attendance.aspx>

Registration:

Schools are required by law to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**.

Only schools can authorise absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

90% attendance might sound impressive, but actually ...

- If a child has 90% attendance over a school year, this means that 4 whole weeks' (20 days) worth of lessons have been missed
- If 90% attendance is maintained over 5 years, half a school year will have been missed overall.

90% attendance is not impressive; we use this Attendance Ladder in school to make sure children realise that in Attendance terms, 90% represents a significant, persistent problem that needs to be avoided. The DfE identifies 90% as persistent absence, and therefore the school uses this percentage to trigger documentation linked to persistent absence. If your child's attendance falls to 90% or below, medical evidence will be required to authorise the absence.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical appointments 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:

- parents keeping children off from school unnecessarily;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive to school after the close of the register;
- school refusal;
- holidays taken during term time that have not been authorised by the Headteacher;
- when your child's attendance is 90% or below, medical evidence is required to authorise any absences.

When completing the register, school follow the DfE school attendance guidance to determine which relevant code to use; The register will be taken twice a day, at the start of the morning and the afternoon.

Morning registration:

Gates open - The morning register is taken at 8.40am for Moorland Road Site, 8.30am for Pye Green Road Site. The register is taken at 8.55am.

Children arriving after the register has been taken but before 9.25am are recorded as late – L. Registration closes 30 minutes after registration opens.

Children arriving at school after this time are 'late - after registration closes' and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable reason for the lateness – U.

If a child has 10 U and O codes within a 10-week period, school will be required to report to the Local Authority for statutory action.

Afternoon registration:

The afternoon register is taken at 12.45pm for reception & Years 1 & 2 at 1.15pm for Moorland Road Site and 1.0pm for Years 3 & 4 and 1.15 pm for Years 5 & 6 Pye Green Road Site.

If lateness is a cause for concern, the following procedures will be applied:

1. Parents will receive a letter informing them of the concern.
2. The Education Welfare Office (EWO) from VIP Education will contact parents to further discuss and offer support and advice to improve punctuality.
3. Parents will be invited to a meeting with the EWO. The discussion held will be documented by the EWO and an action plan to improve punctuality will be devised with parents and the pupil during the meeting and a review date set if needed
4. If no improvement is evidenced, the school will follow Staffordshire County Councils Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for persistent lateness.

More information can be found at:

[Attendance - Staffordshire County Council](#)

Absence:

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties at school should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff to resolve any problems. This is nearly always successful.

Alternatively, parents or pupils may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent to the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office.

If a child is absent from school, we ask parents to:

- Contact the school office by 9am on the first morning of absence and leave a message or email office@moorhill.set.org
- Reply promptly to any request or enquiry concerning an absence

If parents do not contact the school on the morning of the first day of absence, a member of the administration staff will try to contact them to find out the reason for absence. This ensures that the parent is aware their child is not in school, enabling the parent, where necessary, to establish that their child is safe.

If the reason for absence is not known by 10:00am, the school will request the EWO to establish contact by either telephone, text message or a home visit may be completed. If a child is off for 3 days or more, a home visit will be completed as part of Safeguarding Policy Procedures. School does carry out home visits before day 3 where they deem appropriate.

A reason for a period of absence is always required. The school will contact parents who have not offered a reason and after a two-week period, will mark the absence as unauthorised if no suitable reason is provided.

Children Missing in Education:

Schools have a duty by law to refer any absence of 20 days or more to Staffordshire County Council's Children Missing in Education department where they have been unable to contact the parent/child or have

general concerns about the absence. In line with our safeguarding policy, which is based on the Staffordshire Safeguarding policy, we will do this following a continuous absence of 10 days or more.

To avoid any referrals, parents are requested to inform the school if they are moving house/area or country and to provide a forwarding address, contact number and the name of the new school if known.

Medical Absence:

Schools have the responsibility to decide whether an absence can be authorised on medical grounds. If your child's attendance falls to 90% or below, parents will be asked to provide evidence that their child is too unwell to attend school by providing a note from a medical professional. If the school has concerns about the level of medical absence that a pupil has incurred, they will contact the parents/carers to discuss it further and to find out whether their GP or other health professional has been contacted. Please speak to the school if you want advice regarding what is accepted as medical evidence.

If attendance does not improve, the school may request parents to seek a note of explanation from the relevant health professional or may involve the school's nurse. If despite the request for the note of explanation, no note is forthcoming; school may not be able to authorise absences unless satisfactory medical evidence is provided to support the pupil's inability to attend school.

Long term medical absence:

The school follows the procedures set out by Staffordshire County Council "Children who are missing Education due to Health/Medical Needs" More information can be found at:

[Staffordshire Connects | Protocol for Children who are missing Education due to Health/Medical Needs](#)

Medical and Dental Appointments:

We expect parents to make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during the school holidays whenever possible. If this is not possible then confirmation of the appointment will be required prior to authorising the absence. Children are expected to attend school prior to the appointment, and parents are expected to return their children to the school following the appointment whenever possible.

Requests for leave of absence:

Leave of absence requests, including holiday leave requests, may only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**.

If a parent wishes to request leave for their child for any reason, they must apply in advance and in writing using the leave of absence request form which can be collected from the office. Where a child does not reside with both parents, it is the responsibility of the parent to make the request to inform the other parent. The school will send a reply to both parents.

If a request for leave has not been received and we have reason to believe a pupil is on holiday, it is likely that our EWO will visit the home address in this circumstance and a letter will be sent to parents requesting medical evidence. If no medical evidence can be provided, the absence may be coded as unauthorised and a penalty notice request sent to the Local Authority. Parents will also be requested to attend a meeting with the EWO.

Any request made because of exceptional circumstances can only be judged on a case-by-case basis, considering individual circumstances. Requests should be made in writing at least 28 days before the period of requested absence, otherwise they will be automatically unauthorised. Only the Headteacher can overrule this, in discussion with the Academy Council, and only in exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances are applied to those parents who work in the police / armed forces and fire service (limited to one holiday per academic year), religious reasons (limited to 1 day per religious observation), births, deaths and marriages of immediate family members only (parents and siblings, limited to a maximum of 3 days per absence).

Even with the exceptional circumstances, we will still consider the following on a case-by- case basis before permission can be granted:

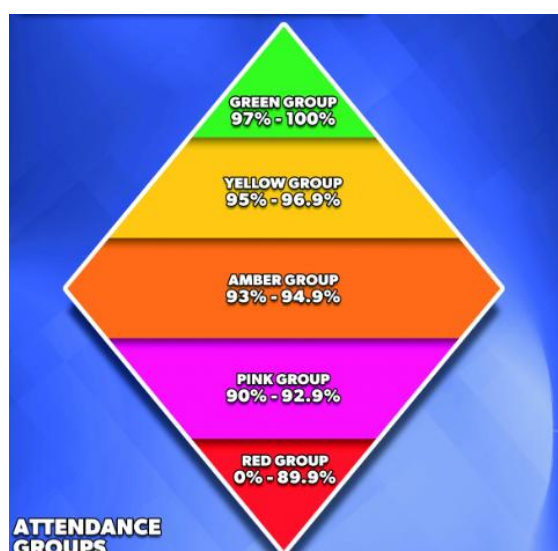
- Current level of school attendance including punctuality. Where attendance is below 90% the absence may not be authorised, even in the case of exceptional circumstances;
- The current progress being made towards individual pupils' academic targets;
- The time and length of the requested exceptional absence;
- The amount of exceptional absence that has been authorised previously.

If an unauthorised leave of absence is taken, the school follows the Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for unauthorised leave of absence. More information can be found at;

[Penalty-Notice-Code-of-Conduct-July-24-FINAL.pdf](#)

Rewarding good school attendance: All children who have 100% attendance in any term will receive an excellence 100% sticker.

On a weekly basis, the class(es) with the highest attendance in the school (N-Y6) are announced in assembly.



On a weekly basis, the children are reminded of our whole school target of 97%, and our whole school % for the week is shared, with encouragement to raise the percentage the following week. Each classroom at Moorhill Primary uses an **Attendance Diamond** system to visually represent each child's attendance, with their name and a colour-coded indicator.

Over the year, pupils' attendance, which has improved, will also receive recognition and a certificate.

Monitoring attendance and lateness:

The school aims to achieve at least 97% attendance each year. To help with this, we monitor attendance regularly. The school has established a system for monitoring attendance and lateness, the purpose and aims of which are as follows:

- To improve the overall percentage of attendance and improve pupils' punctuality at school.
- To make attendance and punctuality a high priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, staff and Academy Councilors'.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance and punctuality related data.
- To develop and implement an effective system of communication between school and home.
- To reward good attendance and punctuality.
- To work effectively with the Local Authority and other agencies that support attendance and punctuality.

Our independent EWO from VIP Education regularly monitors pupils' attendance that falls below the school's annual attendance target. Where there appears to be a particular problem with attendance, the following procedures are applied:

- A letter is sent to parents informing them of a decline in school attendance and the need for this to improve due to the impact on the pupil's education.
- If school attendance continues to decline, a further concern letter is sent to parents.
- If still no improvement is seen, parents and pupils will be invited into a meeting with the EWO to discuss the concerns and to offer support around any possible barriers or problems at home or at school which may be contributing to poor school attendance. The discussion held will be documented by the EWO and an action plan to improve school attendance will be devised with parents and pupils during the meeting and a review date set if needed.
- If school attendance does not improve, the school may follow Staffordshire County Councils Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for persistent absence.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

[Penalty-Notice-Code-of-Conduct-July-24-FINAL.pdf](#)

Parents/carers have the legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time, properly dressed, with the correct equipment and ready to learn. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act, Section 444. It aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure a suitable education for their children. If a child is in the care of foster carers or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance of school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, education welfare services, and social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of the following criteria is met:

- There is unauthorised absence of least 10 sessions (each school day contains two sessions) this may comprise of any unauthorised absence or late arrival at school or alternative provision over a rolling period of 10 school weeks, excluding school holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive.
- If in an individual case the LA believes a penalty notice is appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the 10-session threshold is met. In such instances there must be at least 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in term time not authorised by the head teacher over a period of 10 rolling school weeks or any period of leave more than the period authorised by the head teacher.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded/suspended from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the Local Authority with whom other interventions will be used.

A session is equivalent to half a day in school. Other conditions.

- Only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate as detailed below.
- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In this case, where the criteria to issue a penalty notice is met for a third time within 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.
- All Penalty Notices are entered onto a database maintained by the Local Authority to ensure that no duplicate Penalty Notices are issued.

Please note: Where the Penalty Notice is requested from a school in response to a leave of absence (holiday) related unauthorised absence or is in relation to an offence under section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the formal warning letter and 20-day improvement period will not apply.

All Penalty Notices are entered onto a database maintained by Families First to ensure that no duplicate Penalty Notices are issued.

Use of a Penalty Notice or formal warning of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised persistent absence / lateness will be restricted to one notice/ warning per parent of a pupil per academic year.

Payment of Penalty Notices:

For a **First** offence the Penalty Notice fine would be: -

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £160 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.

For a **Second** offence within 3-years of the first penalty notice being issued, the penalty notice fine would be:

- £160 per parent, per child if paid before the 28 day's notice.

Following the second offence, **every new offence within the 3-year period will be prosecuted** under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. I must advise you that if the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is **£1,000 per parent, per child**. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school. Non-payment of Penalty Notices

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will result in the withdrawal of the Penalty Notice and will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Elective Home Education If a school receives written notification from parents that they wish to educate their child, then we will inform the Local Authority of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home to educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record. Prior to deciding to Elective Home Educate, Parents are requested to contact Staffordshire County Councils Elective Home Education department.

Summary:

It is vital to a child's progress that they attend school as often as possible and that they are on time. There are strong and proven links between pupil attendance and educational achievement. Attendance of less than 95% (equivalent to 9.5 days or more absence in a school year) has been shown to compromise pupil attainment. An attendance of 90% is equivalent to missing 19 days or nearly 4 weeks from school in a year. Whilst we are a primary school, statistics show that only 10% of pupils who are persistently absent from school achieve 5 A*-C grades at GCSE/the equivalent on the 1-9 scale grades.

Impact of absence:

90% attendance = 19 days off school

85% attendance = 29 days off school (a whole half term!)

80% attendance = 38 days off school

70% attendance = 57 days off school (a whole term!)

Impact of lateness:

Over a school year:

5 minutes late every day = 3 days absent

15 minutes every day = 10 days absent

30 minutes late every day = 19 days absent

If parents have any concerns relating to attendance or lateness that they wish to discuss, they should contact Mrs. T. West or Mrs. L. Banks in the first instance. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

Stage 1 Letter - Initial Concern Letter

Dear Mrs Sample

As you are aware Sample School monitors the attendance of students. As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our students we formally monitor attendance to identify any student whose attendance causes concern. We then issue a first letter to register our concern with parents/carers. During this routine monitoring of attendance, we have noticed that Jonathan's attendance is currently 83.3%. This is below the expected level of attendance.

At Sample School we value and reward good attendance as research shows that your child is more likely to achieve their academic attainment if they have a good attendance record. The information below illustrates the impact that poor attendance can have on your child's educational success.

☐ Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year

Students in this group will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Students will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.

☐ 95%: 10 days absence a year

Students in this group are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Students who take a 10 day holiday during term time every year can only ever achieve 95% attendance.

☐ 92%: 15 days absence a year

Students in this group are missing three weeks of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best. The school may consider referring students with this level of attendance to the Local Authority.

☐ 90%: 19 days absence a year

The Government classes students in this group as 'Persistent Absentees' and it will be almost impossible for them to keep up with work. Parents of students in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by the Local Authority.

Please ensure that over the coming weeks your child's attendance improves to meet the minimum expected level of 96%

We can support you and your child around any attendance issues you may have, therefore please do not hesitate to contact Mrs West on 01543227185 should you wish to discuss this further.

Thank you for your cooperation and support with this matter.

Yours sincerely

Stage 2 Letter: Ongoing Attendance Concerns

Dear Mrs Sample

As you are aware Sample School monitors the attendance of students. Since we wrote to you, Jonathan's attendance has failed to improve significantly and is now 83.3%, this includes 5 occasions of unauthorised absence.

This is below the minimum expectation and is having an impact on your child's education. To put this into perspective 90% attendance is equivalent to missing 19 days of school per year.

Authorised absence means that school has given approval in advance for a student to be away from school or that the explanation offered afterwards by a parent/carer has been accepted. Decisions regarding the authorisation of absences are the responsibility of the Headteacher. Unauthorised absences on your child's attendance record may mean that you are liable to incur a Fixed Penalty Notice or could face prosecution. Due to the current level of absence please note that any future absences relating to illness and/or medical reasons will not be authorised without some additional assurances that the absences are unavoidable. Some examples of evidence that could be used are Prescriptions, Appointment Cards, Doctor's Notes etc. If this evidence is not supplied, your child's absence will be recorded as an 'Unauthorised' absence.

Only in exceptional circumstances will low attending students not get monitored, these would be children with medical conditions requiring repeat treatment or who have had a stay in hospital.

To support you and your child a parent survey has been attached to this letter. Please use this form as an opportunity to provide any further information that may help to understand your child's absence.

Please complete and return to the school office as soon as possible.

We would appreciate your support to make sure your child's attendance improves. We will continue to monitor the situation and will be in touch again if it does not improve and this may lead to a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team.

We can support you and your child around attendance issues you may have therefore please do not hesitate to contact Mrs West on 01543227185 should you wish to discuss this further.

Thank you for your cooperation and support with this matter.

Yours sincerely

Stage 3 - Attendance Support Meeting Invitation

Dear Mrs Sample

As you are aware Sample School monitors the attendance of students. As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our students we formally monitor attendance to identify any student whose attendance causes concern.

We recently wrote to you advising that your child's school attendance is a cause for concern and unfortunately it has not improved. Therefore, you are invited to attend an attendance support plan meeting in school to discuss their attendance.

Our Independent Education Welfare Officer Amy Cooling from VIP Education will be conducting the meeting, and support will be offered to improve attendance where required.

The meeting has been arranged for: _____ Pye Green Road, this can either be an inperson or via telephone.

If the date and time is inconvenient and you would like to reschedule, please call the school to rearrange.

If you do not attend, the meeting will still go ahead.

Please ensure that over the coming weeks your child's attendance improves to meet the minimum expected level of 96%

We can support you and your child around any attendance issues you may have, therefore please do not hesitate to contact Mrs West on 01543227185 should you wish to discuss this further.

Thank you for your cooperation and support with this matter.

Yours sincerely