



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Introductory Statement

At Moorside Primary Academy we believe that every child should be supported and challenged to reach their full potential, both academically and socially. In order for this to happen, all children need to attend school regularly. Achieving good school attendance and punctuality needs school and parents to work together to ensure that every child has the very best start in life.

Good attendance and punctuality helps children achieve academically, gain self-confidence, develop a sense of belonging and maintain friendships. Good attendance now, means developing an understanding of responsibility and reliability which will help children through their teenage years and into adulthood, particularly in their working lives. We firmly believe we are starting the formation of habits for life when setting attendance and punctuality patterns for children from the earliest point of their education.

Roles and responsibilities

Every child has the right to a good education. The legal position (Education Acts 1944 and 1956):

- The **LA** (Local Authority) has the responsibility of offering educational provision for all school aged children in Tameside through its schools and the Education Welfare Service.
- **School** has a responsibility to ensure that all children in their care receive an education appropriate to their level and need. At Moorside, we strive to provide this in a pleasant, safe and happy environment. School must keep an attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and report all pupils who fail to attend regularly or for extended periods of time.
- **Parents** have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive their right to an education by ensuring they attend school regularly. Failure to do so may lead to prosecution.
- **The Education Welfare Service (EWS)** has the role of helping parents, school and the LA meet statutory obligations on school attendance.

It is essential that parents ensure school have up to date home, work and emergency contact details of at least 2 people and remain contactable during school hours.

School **MUST** account for all children between 9am- 3.15pm. Phone calls, home visits and signing in and out systems are necessary in order to ensure all children are safeguarded. Parents **MUST** follow procedures to avoid confusion or concern.

Procedures for Attendance (including for *Nursery children):

- If a child is absent from school for any reason it is the parent's responsibility to inform school by 9am by telephone, in person, letter or email. This must then be confirmed in writing within 3 days of the child's return to school.
- If the reason for absence is known in advance, the parent must inform the school in writing before the first day of absence.
- If a parent has not contacted school, it is the school's responsibility to contact home to confirm the reason for absence.
- In the event of a child being absent without explanation from the parents/carers, school will make rigorous checks to ensure the child is safe. In the first instance, school will contact the primary contact on the child's data collection sheet. School will then continue through the list of contacts until confirmation of the child's safety and reason for absence is established. If school exhausts the contacts, school will visit the home and may consult with other known contacts such as neighbours. If school are concerned further, the Education Welfare Service, Children's Social Care and/or the Police may be informed.
- If school are still unable to contact home a letter will be sent.

- In line with Tameside Educational Welfare Service's Children Missing Education Policy, if a child is missing school for 10 consecutive days without explanation, they will be treated as a child missing education; this is investigated by Tameside EWS. N.B. This does not include nursery children. However, poor attendance in nursery may result in your child's place being offered to another child.
- If a child continues to be absent without contact, school will continue to pursue contact and will try to confirm where the child is through all links known to the family: this may also involve reporting to EWS, Children's Service Hub or the Police.
- If the child is subject to a Child Protection Plan, the Social Worker will be informed of absence.

*Nursery children's attendance is non statutory and therefore referrals would not be made to the Education Welfare Service, however, for safeguarding reasons they must still be accounted for if absent. Therefore, the above procedure still applies. In addition to this, if the period of absence is in excess of 10 consecutive days, consideration will be given to withdraw the place and offer it to another child.

Procedures for Lateness (Reception – Year 6)

- School doors open at 8.50am and registration is at 9am.
- If a child arrives after 9am but before 9.30am, they will receive a "late mark".
- If they arrive after 9.30am, they will receive an unauthorised absence for that session.
- In all circumstances of lateness, the parent must sign the child into the building using the Entry Sign System. Parents must record the name of the child and give an accurate reason for the lateness.

Procedures for Lateness (Nursery)

- The morning session starts at 8.45am and the afternoon session starts at 12.30pm
- Children arriving after this time will receive a "late mark"
- If they arrive 30 minutes after the start of their session they will receive an unauthorised absence for that session
- In all circumstances of lateness, the parent must sign the child into the building using the Entry Sign System. Parents must record the name of the child and give an accurate reason for the lateness.

Definition - Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been absent from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised by the school.

Definition - Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is absent from school without the permission of BOTH the school and a parent. The absence is unauthorised if a child is absent from school without good reason, even with the permission of a parent.

Medical appointments

We ask that wherever possible medical appointments are made outside of school hours. It is most important that you inform the school office, prior to the appointment, if your child is to be absent from school. Appointment letters can be copied at the office in advance of the appointment. Children brought in before 10.45am will receive a late medical mark. Children brought in after 10.45am will be given an authorised medical absence.

Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be absent from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send work home so that the child can keep up with their education if they are well enough to do so. If appropriate, the school will liaise with other services in order to provide appropriate support.

Where a pupil with a medical condition is absent for 15 school days in an academic year and the absence relates directly to the medical condition, school will notify the LA via medicalenquiries@tameside.gov.uk.

Requests for leave of absence

Following a change in the law from 1st September 2013, Principals and Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents must inform the Principal in writing of their intention to keep their child off school and give a detailed reason for this.

There is no predefined criteria for exceptional circumstances. Instead, these are considered on an individual basis. After consideration of the circumstances, the Principal will inform the parent of how the absence will be recorded. The Principal should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Whatever the circumstances, leave will not be granted in the following cases:

- If the child's attendance is already below 97%
- If leave is not requested in advance
- During any test/assessment periods
- At the start of any academic year
- If holidays have been taken during the past 12 months during term time (either authorised or not)
- During Year 6

Any absences taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract a penalty notice.

Penalty Notices

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. This means that parents/carers may receive a fine for absences of 10 unauthorised sessions or more. There are 2 sessions in each school day – morning and afternoon.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Each parent who resides with the child must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. In cases where poor attendance continues, this may result in Court Proceedings.

A letter of further explanation is attached and is sent to parents termly.

Understanding the importance and impact of attendance and punctuality on education

It is important to remember that 5% absence each year can equate to a full GCSE grade at the end of Year 11; persistent absence must be monitored and promptly addressed.

98-100% attendance enables children to maximise their potential academically and socially.

95-97% attendance is the minimum expectation for all children to be able to achieve good academic progress.

92-94% attendance is a cause for concern. School will closely monitor attendance and inform parents if their child falls below 95% on a half termly basis. Steps should be taken to reduce further absence to minimise the

detrimental impact on learning. Parents may receive a Penalty Notice if 10 or more sessions are unauthorised. If absence is impacted on by medical conditions, a Health Care Plan must be in place.

Below 92% attendance is very concerning and equates to several weeks of lost learning time. At primary level, this can have a huge impact on the building blocks for future learning and educational outcomes. An attendance agreement must be completed between home and school to help address this level of attendance. If absence is affected by medical conditions, a Health Care Plan must also be in place. Further absence without medical evidence is unlikely to be authorised.

Parents could be issued with a Penalty Notice or face legal action (prosecution with a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment).

Where a child has persistent lateness or absence, the school is responsible for pursuing with parents the reasons for this, agreeing an action plan and, if necessary, holding an Attendance Panel and involving other agencies where appropriate.

Frequent lateness can have the same impact on learning as poor attendance. It also impacts on confidence, behaviour and disrupts other children's learning. Lateness will always be challenged. In the event of more than 3 late marks in a half term, a letter will be sent home. If the lateness continues parents will be required to discuss and resolve issues directly with the Principal.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The official registers are maintained.
- The registers are checked and procedures followed on a daily basis.
- Attendance is given a high profile in school and children are rewarded for good attendance.
- Weekly class attendance awards are given.
- Children achieving 100% attendance are recognised termly and at the end of the academic year.
- Parents are informed of their child's attendance via in an annual school report.
- Parents will be informed by school when attendance falls below 95% on a half termly basis.
- The Governors will monitor attendance via the Principal's Governors' Report.
- The Governors and Principal are pro-active in attendance target setting, and will provide panel members should an Attendance Panel need to be convened.

Children missing from education

A child missing from school is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Staff will monitor children who go missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions, and report them to the designated safeguarding lead, following normal safeguarding procedures.

In order to ensure accurate data is collected to allow effective safeguarding, the school will inform the LA of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education.
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school.
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- Have been permanently excluded.

The Local Authority must be notified when a school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met and always before deleting the pupil's name from the register. It is essential that schools comply with this duty, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years and may be amended in accordance with LA, Enquire Learning Trust or National policy/legislation changes.

Date: October 2019

Review Date: October 2021