

Attendance Policy

20-21

This policy has been constructed following consultation with school staff, governors and parents. It has been initially written following the DFE Guidance Document (Advice on school attendance, November 2016) on ensuring regular school attendance but takes into account the recent guidance following the lockdown measures implemented due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Urmston Primary School follows the government guidance found in the addendum linked here:

***https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year***

***Review***

This policy is reviewed bi-annually as part of the School’s Policy Review Cycle. Despite this, it has been looked at now in light of current circumstances. The policy is largely the same but alludes to the expectations for attendance at school set by the DfE from September 2020.

***Introduction***

Regular school attendance is of vital importance. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities that are available to them. It is essential that children learn the importance of being punctual as part of their preparation for adult life, therefore we aim to embed this good practice from an early age. We expect the school and parents to work together in order to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality. Following the rise of the Covid-19 pandemic Urmston Primary’s main focus for attendance has been on the strong communication and reassurance needed for our families and the community.

***Aims***

• To maximise academic and social attainment through good attendance of all pupils.

• To provide a positive, welcoming and reassuring environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school.

• To monitor and support pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties.

• To work closely with and make full use of support from the wider community including the Children and Young People’s Service.

***The School will:***

* Communicate effectively and frequently with parents and discuss any concerns surrounding C-19 symptoms and the health and safety in the current climate.

• Make the curriculum as exciting and engaging as possible.

• Give attendance and punctuality a high priority by recognising and acknowledging good attendance and punctuality.

• Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and their presence is valued.

• Raise awareness of the importance of attendance and punctuality using newsletters, parents’ evenings and other communications to parents.

• Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child’s education.

• Carry out first day calling within the appropriate time scales.

• Approach individual parents where there is concern about their child’s attendance and/or punctuality.

• Issue a termly letter to parents whose child’s attendance falls below the school’s target (following appropriate analysis of reasons and trends) or whose punctuality is a cause for concern.

• Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.

• Communicate effectively with other agencies.

• Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence.

• Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.

• Ensure any relevant information is available for Governors and parents.

• Ensure good liaison where a change of school occurs.

• Work in partnership with Trafford who have a statutory duty to enforce the law in relation to absence from school. This could include penalty notices or parental prosecution.

• Make this policy available on the school’s website and provide paper copies on request.

***We expect the parent to:***

• Agree to the main principles and values of the school.

• Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child.

• Provide up-to-date contact numbers and change of address.

• Notify the school before 9.15 am or 9.30am (depending on their start time) when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of absence and keep the school updated on when the child is likely to return to school.

• Provide a note when the child returns from an absence. This should be on the first day the child returns to school.

• Provide an original appointment letter note indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen.

• Ensure that their child arrives at school on time every day.

• Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down, if an urgent appointment has been made or if an emergency has arisen.

***Absence concerning Covid-19***

The school’s risk assessment outlines the expectations regarding attendance from September 2020. It also outlines the procedures in place should a child have symptoms at home or present with symptoms in school. This risk assessment can be found on the school website at ***https://urmstonprimary.com/information/covid-19-procedures.*** This is summarised also in Appendix 1.

***Leave of absence during term time***

• Absence during term time is actively discouraged and parents are advised that holidays should be taken during the school holiday periods.

• The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. This is in accordance with the DfE Guidance Document, ‘Advice on School Attendance November 2016.’ From September 1st 2013 the law does not allow Headteachers to authorise parents to take their child on holiday during term time.

• When a request for leave of absence is made, the Headteacher will consider the request based on:

* The age of the child
* The child’s educational progress
* The overall attendance of the child. No absences will be authorised for any child whose attendance is below 96%.
* Whether it coincides with key assessments

• The Headteacher will not authorise holiday leave taken for the following reasons:

* Availability of cheap holidays
* Availability of a desired location
* Poor weather during school holidays
* If the child is likely to miss key assessments. This is in line with Trafford’s ‘Family Holidays in Term Time’ document

• Applications during term time must be made in writing, stating the reason for the absence being taken during term time, the first date of absence and the date of return. A ‘Leave of Absence Request form’ is available from the school office.

• If a child is taken on holiday without prior authorisation, or without any authorisation, the school can request a penalty notice or a parental prosecution.

***Absence for special circumstances***

Absence of a pupil on days that are exclusively set aside for religious observance in their particular faith will be coded as a religious absence. A single day absence may be authorised for attending a wedding – travelling time etc for weddings held in distant locations will not be authorised.

***Term time absence for specific purposes (e.g. external examinations, sports, performing arts)***

* For authorisation of a single absence to be considered, a written request must be made in advance.

***Illness***

• Parents and carers are asked to contact school before 9.30am on the first day of absence to provide the reason for the absence and the approximate day a child is likely to return to school. The school office makes a record of the reason for absence following a verbal conversation with the parent.

• Where office staff are not made aware of the reason for a child’s absence they will attempt to contact parents/carers by telephone on the first day of absence.

***Medical and Dental Appointments***

• Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. However, we would ask that appointments be made outside of school hours. Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of these appointments five working days in advance, with a copy of the official appointment card or letter – this may be via a text or screenshot if paper copies are not sent by the medical service.

***Punctuality***

• Due to the need to maintain social distancing, the school day starts at two different times - 8.40am and 8.55am, depending on the class or year group. Children can begin to come into the building 10 minutes before these times. Shortly after this time children will be required to enter through the front door and the parent sign in late through the school’s electronic sign-in system.

• Children who arrive after 8.45am and 9am will be marked as late. Children who arrive after 9.15am and 9.30am respectively will be marked in the register as absent (unauthorised) for the whole of the morning session.

• Children should not be left unsupervised in the playground before school.

• Children must be met promptly at the end of the school day. In addition, the school expects parents to collect their children promptly from after-school clubs. If there is likely to be an unavoidable delay in collection please inform the school office by telephone as soon as possible. Children collected late from school must be signed out at the office.

***Exclusions***

If a child is excluded from school, parents have a duty to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice issued by the Education Welfare service.

***Reporting to Parents***

As mentioned above, all children’s attendance is monitored every half term and letters are sent on a termly basis to parents and carers of any pupils falling below the school’s target. However, the Headteacher will look at trends and reasons for absence before sending these letters. All absences, both authorised and unauthorised, and lateness, will be reported to the parents/carers at the end of the academic year as part of their child’s annual report. Class teachers will report any concerns about a child’s attendance to the child’s parents at Parents’ Evenings, which take place twice a year.

***Strategies used to promote Good Attendance and Punctuality***

• Class teachers will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that all pupils feel that they can succeed.

• Individual pupils / families whose attendance has been a cause for concern will be encouraged to set and achieve personal goals.

***Monitoring and Evaluation***

Attendance data will be collected half-termly to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include children with:

• Patterns of absence (e.g. same day absences)

• Lateness

• Periods of extended absence

• Periods of unauthorised absence

• All children whose attendance falls below the school’s target, (which is currently set at 96%), and in particular those with attendance below 85%. A child whose attendance is below 85% is categorised as a ‘persistent absentee’ according to Department for Education guidelines.

This data will be discussed by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher with the School Governors as part of their regular meetings. They discuss the impact of the School’s Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance annually.

***Summary***

1. Registered pupils of compulsory age are required by law to be in school.

2. Whilst it is right that schools should recognise that individual pupils and families have their own circumstances, the aim should always be to expect regular attendance.

3. Lateness should be actively discouraged.

4. Where a pupil is absent without prior authorisation, an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming (for whatever reason), the absence must be treated as unauthorised and the register annotated accordingly.

5. Schools are not obliged to accept parental notes where there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered.

6. Parents should not expect school to agree to family holidays during term time.

7. Even where absence is authorised, school will be alert to emerging patterns of absence which may seriously disrupt continuity of learning.

8. Penalty notices may be issued, through the Local Authority, where a parent is capable but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child’s school attendance or punctuality.

Date of policy: September 2020

Review date: September 2021

Headteacher: *Simon Parker*

Chair of Governors: Derek Brown

*Appendix 1:*



