

# Primary Attendance Policy

<b>APPROVING BODY</b>	Executive Board
<b>DATE APPROVED</b>	31/08/22
<b>VERSION</b>	1:0
<b>SUPERSEDES VERSION</b>	All previous versions
<b>REVIEW DATE</b>	31/08/23
<b>FURTHER INFORMATION / GUIDANCE</b>	<a href="#">School attendance guidance for maintained schools.</a>

## **Rationale**

For a pupil to reach their full educational achievement a high-level of school attendance is essential. Poor attendance does disadvantage pupils. Attendance is a key whole-academy improvement issue: it has a direct relationship with the attainment and progress of individuals and groups of pupils and the standards thereby achieved by the academy.

We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We endeavour to ensure that all pupils attend the academy regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

## **Aims and Objectives**

- To continue to raise levels of achievement and participation by maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance.
- To inform parents/carers of punctuality and attendance issues.
- To identify the causes of non-attendance and act upon them.
- To ensure all staff understand their roles in the monitoring and recording of attendance.
- To maintain and improve attendance throughout the Academy through rewarding and target setting.
- To monitor and evaluate the processes on a regular basis.
- To give clear information on expected levels of attendance.

## **Attendance Legislation**

*Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their pupil of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the pupil's age, ability and aptitude and to any special needs the pupil may have. This can be regular attendance at school or by education otherwise*

*If a pupil of compulsory school age, who is registered at a school, fails to attend regularly at school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.*

*Compulsory school age is defined as beginning from the term after they turn five. A pupil continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday in June in the school year that they reach sixteen.*

*The issue of a penalty notice under section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act may be considered in cases where a pupil is absent from the academy and the absence is unauthorised.*

## **Key Personnel**

<b>Academy Name:</b>	<b>Robert Mellors Primary Academy</b>
<b>Head teacher:</b>	<b>Emma Essex</b>
<b>School Attendance Administrator:</b>	<b>Julie Bridges</b>
<b>Trust Attendance Officer:</b>	<b>Rachael Rodgers</b>

## **Responsibilities**

We are required to take an attendance register twice a day, at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register must show whether any absence is authorised or unauthorised. It is the academy and not the parent who authorises absences. The behaviour/attendance policy outlines effective systems for encouraging regular attendance, investigating underlying causes of poor attendance and the referral pathway when attendance concerns remain.

This policy is determined by the Executive Board. A request for service is made to the Local Authority when the Academy interventions have not resolved the attendance concerns.

## **Requests for external support (service)**

The trigger for a request for external support will correlate to the service criteria in force at the time. There are two triggers for request for service:

- 10% unauthorised absence over a rolling 6 school week period.
- Penalty notices for unagreed leave of absence with 5 continuous school days of unauthorised absence sessions.
- If there are other unauthorised absences besides the dates of the unagreed leave then these dates will be considered and the appropriate course of action initiated.

## **The academy will ensure that:**

- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Attendance targets are set for individual pupils, tutor groups and houses.
- Attendance and punctuality data is regularly monitored, and appropriate interventions put into place.

Our staff have a major role to play in encouraging pupils to be punctual and to attend school each day. All staff promote high standards of attendance in all year groups by being a good role model, setting an example to pupils and rewarding good attendance and punctuality in line with the school reward system. Parents receive regular communications regarding their pupil's attendance and at parents' evenings

## **Pupils are expected to:**

- Attend school regularly and be punctual.
- Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences.

## **Parents will:**

- Ensure their pupil has good attendance (98% and above).
- Inform the school on each day of absence and giving specific reasons.
- Work with the school to address attendance concerns.

We judge attendance levels using the following criteria:

<b>100%</b>	<b>Outstanding</b> The aim should be for individual pupils to have 100% attendance
<b>98.01% to 99.9%</b>	<b>Excellent</b> (With no unauthorised absence)
<b>96.01% to 98%</b>	<b>Concerns or requires improvement</b> (acknowledge where attendance is improving)
<b>90.1% to 96%</b>	<b>Serious Cause for Concern</b> (acknowledge where attendance has improved but is still below the trust expectations. Working together to improve attendance)
<b>90% and under</b>	<b>Persistent absentee</b> (acknowledge where attendance is close to 90% and improving) Working with parents and external agencies to improve attendance).

**A pupil is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the 1st term after their 5th birthday, so:**

- pupils who turn 5 between 1st January and 31st March will be of compulsory school age at the beginning of the school term after 31st March (summer term);
- pupils who turn 5 between 1st April and 31st August will be of compulsory school age at the beginning of the school term after 31st August (autumn term);
- pupils who turn 5 between 1st September and 31st December will be of compulsory school age at the beginning of the school term after 31st December (spring term).

**Nursery education**

- should a parent/carer choose to accept a reception place for their 4 year old, we strongly encourage good attendance. This ensures continuity of education and minimises disruption to learning.
- if a pupil is under five and has been an allocated place in our academy, we expect parents to follow this attendance policy.

**Reporting Pupil Absence**

All pupils are likely to be absent or late for school at some time. However, persistent poor attendance and/or punctuality is disruptive to the individual, their peers and their learning and may be an early warning of other difficulties. All planned appointments for pupils to attend the dentist or doctor should be made outside of the academy day.

When a pupil is absent from the academy, parents must notify us by no later than 9:30am on each day of absence either via telephone, or by leaving a message on the voice message service. Failure to report absence will be followed up by the academy or the Attendance Officer.

The reported absence message may be an answering phone service and as such a message can be left at any time. If a message is left it should include in order:

- Pupil's name
- Reason for absence

- Anticipated return date

## **First Day Call**

We operate a “first day call” system. This will mean that all parents/carers can expect to be contacted on the first day of any absence if we have not been previously informed, via telephone, text message or email. If contact cannot be made during this day a letter will be sent home. A satisfactory reply to the letter will authorise this absence; otherwise, it will remain as unauthorised.

Where contact has been attempted but no reply is received and absence continues, further action will be taken, including:

- Informing key staff
- A home visit
- Following of the Early Intervention Policy

## **Punctuality**

We have a morning 15-minute registration period - at the end of that point, the teaching staff will submit the registers to the admin staff. Any pupil arriving after this time will then be recorded as late, by up to 30 minutes after the register has been submitted. The registers will then close and any pupil arriving more than 30 minutes late (without a specific reason such as a medical appointment) will be marked accordingly.

The Head teacher is able to apply discretion for pupils with exceptional circumstances, where an L code or absent mark is not appropriate due to continued frequent but, explained lateness that is out of the control of the parent/carer.

Our staff operate late gate checks throughout the year without notice. This is at the academy’s discretion. Persistent punctuality issues will result in a meeting being held in the academy to discuss a way forward to improve the pupil’s punctuality with a member of academy staff or the Attendance Officer.

## **Safeguarding Procedures and Attendance**

We set high expectations for attendance at their academies. As a result of this, we monitor carefully, any period of absence and visit the family home of any pupil whose parent or carer has not contacted the academy to explain the absence. Within 5 days absence, we will visit the family home regardless of contact made. We will undertake every reasonable task to find a pupil and support them back into the academy, including - using all contact details supplied to us by parents and carers; asking friends and their parents for information and asking neighbours or siblings/relatives’ schools or workplaces for further information. Should we have further concerns, and a pupil is absent for 10 days, we will complete the Children Missing Education (CME) documentation as set out in Department for Education guidance - Pupils Missing Education 2016 DfE.

Where we have concerns that pupils and their families have moved out of the area or are unable to attend the academy for reasons that cause concern – fleeing domestic abuse; FGM; criminal behaviour; substance misuse; poor mental health etc, then we will refer to the most appropriate

external agency for support. Staff are fully aware of all concerns that may lead to absences from the academy and receive regular updates on the various issues during staff training.

### **Pupils Missing in Education and Early Intervention**

Where the parent of a pupil notifies the academy that the pupil will live at another address and will move to a new school, we will record in the admission register the new address, and the date from when it is expected the pupil will attend this new school. The pupil will only be removed from register once the new school has confirmed their attendance. If we receive no such confirmation we will continue to complete safe and well checks and will inform the local authority that the pupil is missing.

Pupils who have failed to attend the academy for 10 days will be dealt with according to an agreed protocol with the Pupils Missing Education Officer.

1. We will contact the Pupils Missing Education Officer with the pupil details, nature of the problem and evidence of academy contact.
2. If a pupil has a continued period of unexplained absence we will complete a home visit within 10 days. If the matter remains unresolved at this point the academy will contact the local authority pupils missing education team.
3. For a pupil who is subject to a pupil protection plan we will notify pupils's social care if there is an unexplained absence of up to 3 days and undertake a home visit within this time
4. The pupils will be reported as "pupil missing from education" and further welfare services will become involved.

This process will begin automatically once a pupil reaches the 10th day, but may start earlier at the discretion of the Head teacher in conjunction with the Attendance Officer.

### **Ongoing Monitoring**

- Monitoring pupils by Pastoral staff.
- Using data to monitor Pupil Premium, Free School Meals, Looked After, SEND and Persistent Absence groups etc.
- Weekly meetings take place involving the Attendance Officer, and key other staff in the academy.
- The Director of Primary Education, Primary Operations Lead and Attendance Director will meet at least once per half term to discuss academy attendance issues.
- Throughout this process, accurate records need to be kept.

### **Electronic Registration**

All staff will use electronic registration to register their class. Where this is not possible, the member of staff affected must inform the Attendance Administrator immediately and take a paper register of the group – this can be obtained from the academy office in an emergency.

### **Persistent Absence**

When a pupil is identified as a potential persistent absentee the Attendance Office/Manager will follow the following procedure:

1. When a pupil is identified as having 90-92% attendance, initial contact will be made by the Attendance Officer with the parent/carer. Targets will be set to improve attendance.

2. The pupil's attendance will be monitored closely, but if no improvements are made and attendance continues to drop then other forms of action will be taken.

In cases of persistent absence (deemed as that below 90%) the following procedure will be followed:

1. When a pupil is identified as having below 90% attendance (Persistent Absentee) a letter will be sent out to the parent/carer by the Attendance Officer. This is to highlight the situation and parents will be invited into the academy to discuss the matter.
2. If a pupil's attendance rate does not improve and a pupil is identified as a Persistent Absence (PA), a second contact letter will be sent by the Attendance Officer to the parent/carer. This will ascertain the nature of any issues of which we ought to be aware and necessary support implemented as required. Targets will be set to improve attendance.

Where pupils are meeting or exceeding their target we will make every effort to recognise and reward improvements in attendance.

### **Medical Appointments**

Parents/carers are requested to make routine medical appointments in academy holidays or after the academy day. If this is not possible, appointments should be made at the start or near the end of the academy day. If an appointment were made for the afternoon, then your pupil would be expected to attend the academy in the morning (unless due to the nature of the appointment this is not possible). If the appointment were made for the morning, then your pupil would be expected to be returned to the academy after the appointment. It is not necessary to have a whole day off for a routine medical appointment. Medical appointments will only be authorised upon receipt of a written appointment card or letter. Failure to produce evidence of a medical appointment will result in the absence being unauthorised.

### **Signing In and Out**

Pupils with appointments must show an appointment card or note from home to their teacher or academy reception. Parents will collect their pupil from the main reception where they will sign out. Marks will be entered for the pupil for the remainder of the session where appropriate.

Parents with pupils who arrive late to the academy for any reason will sign in at the main reception. Their register mark will be entered along with the number of minutes late and, where appropriate, the reason for lateness.

### **Reward Strategies**

There are a number of rewards put in place to positively encourage outstanding attendance.

### **Holidays**

High attainment and progress is reliant on good attendance. Term-time holidays will have a significant impact on achievement and progress, and, therefore, our position is not to authorise any, other than in the most exceptional circumstances. The fundamental principles that we define exceptional are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. By unavoidable, we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 regulations clarify that schools may not grant any leave of

absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Schools should determine the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. In these circumstances, an application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, to the Head teacher in advance of booking the intended holiday. The Head teacher will respond with a decision in writing within one working week.

Fixed penalty notices may be issued for taking your child on holiday during term time without the head teacher's permission.



Staged Approach To the Management of Attendance		
Whole Academy Attendance		
Stage	Trigger	Outcome
1	<b>Attendance falls below the Trust Attendance target &amp; the pupil's attendance is a concern</b>	<p>Letter 1 will be sent to the parents/carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expressing concerns about attendance in the academy.</li> <li>• Informing the parent/carers of current attendance level.</li> <li>• Reminding parents/carers of their legal responsibility &amp; the nature of "persistent absence".</li> <li>• Welcoming the parents/carers to arrange contact with the academy if they wish to discuss attendance further.</li> <li>• Attendance is monitored.</li> </ul>
2	<b>Parents have received a letter 1 &amp; attendance remains a concern</b>	<p>Letter 2 will be sent to parents/carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing parents/carers of on-going concern about their pupil's attendance.</li> <li>• The academy invites parents/carers into school to meet with the Trust Attendance Officer.</li> <li>• Reminding parents/carers of their legal responsibility &amp; the nature of "persistent absence".</li> <li>• Formally notifying parents/carers that that their pupil's attendance is being monitored for a period of time.</li> </ul>
3	<b>Parents have received a letter 1 &amp; 2 &amp; attendance continues to be cause for concern</b>	<p>Letter 3 will be sent to parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notifying the parents/carers that the academy intends to take further action.</li> <li>• Head teacher/Attendance Officer authorises letter to parents/carers and referral to Family Support Services at the Local Authority.</li> </ul>
	<b>During the monitoring period</b>	<p>A letter of Praise will be sent to parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To inform parents/carers of the positive measures being taken to help improve their pupil's attendance.</li> <li>• Notifying the parents/carers that the academy will continue to monitor attendance to ensure sustained improvement.</li> </ul>

