

Millfields First School Attendance Policy

(Including children with health needs who cannot attend school)



Written: November 2022

Approved by Governors: December 2022

To be Reviewed: December 2023

Attendance Policy 2022

1. Rationale

At Millfields First School we recognise that “every moment matters” and that there is a strong link between regular school attendance and educational progress and attainment. Therefore, we strive to work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure that every child achieves the maximum possible attendance thereby enabling them to make a success of their education and realise their full potential. In order to achieve this measures have been put in place to monitor and address any concerns.

2. Aims

- To promote good attendance
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- To establish an ethos of ‘school attendance matters’ through proactive strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- To reduce absence, including persistent absence and severe absence
- To act early to address patterns of absence
- To ensure procedures within the school identify and follow up all absences and patterns of absence at the earliest opportunity.
- To build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have support in place to attend school

3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3.1 Related school policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies

- SEND Policy and Information Report
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy (including Child Protection)

- Anti-bullying Policy

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure relevant staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

4.2 The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

4.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead and the senior leader for attendance is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Monitors trends and patterns of attendance
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Consider attendance as a 'red flag' for safeguarding
- Highlighting any safeguarding consideration and arrangements

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Haines and can be contacted via the school office: telephone number; 01527 831885 or school office email address; office@millfields.worcs.sch.uk.

4.4 The attendance officer is responsible for:

- Daily first day calling for children absent with no contact made by parents/carers
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports for and reporting concerns to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher

- Working with the Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the senior leader for attendance and the Headteacher when fixed penalty notices need to be authorised.

The attendance officer is Ms Benfield and can be contacted via the school office: telephone number; 01527 831885 or school office email address; office@millfields.worcs.sch.uk.

4.5 Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance twice daily, within 10 minutes of the children's arrival time and immediately after lunch. This is to be completed using Scholarpack.

4.6 School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day to day basis and record on Scholarpack
- Pass on calls/ messages from parents of children with low attendance to the senior leader responsible for attendance in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

4.7 Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure that their child attends school every day at the correct time
- Call the school or fill in ParentApp notification to report their child's absence before the start of their child's school day and no later than 9am, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that where possible appointments for their child are made outside if the school day.

4.8 Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

5. Registration

At Millfields we have staggered start times for year groups as detailed in the table below.

Y 4	Back playground	8.40-3.10
Y3	Back playground	8.50-3.20
Y2	Front playground	8.50-3.20
Y1	Front playground	8.45-3.15
Reception	Front playground	8.40-3.10
Willow	Front Playground	8.40-11.40, 12.20-3.20

On arrival children will place their belongings in the designated cloakrooms and then immediately enter their classroom.

Class Teachers will take the morning register within 10 minutes of the classes' arrival time. They will take a second register in the afternoon. Each time the children will be marked as one of the following using the correct code:

- Present
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to illness (if known)

The attendance officer will record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of the illness as described by parents/carers
- The nature of the circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

At Millfields we use an electronic registration system (ScholarPack). Attendance registers are kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations.

Millfields complies with and uses the DfE compulsory national attendance codes

6. Lateness and Punctuality

It is very important that children arrive in school on time, every day.

Any pupil arriving after doors close for their year group will be considered late and will be registered by the office as they are let onto the playground to be collected by a member of staff.

A pupil who arrives after the doors close but before the Class Teacher has closed the register will be marked as late (L). A pupil who arrives after the register has closed (15 minutes from the start of the school day for the child) will be marked as absent. This will be amended by the attendance officer should the child arrive using the appropriate code (U).

A record of how many minutes late will be kept, as this information is integral to our attendance monitoring. Lateness will be monitored on a half termly basis by the Assistant Head Teacher.

Where children are late more than once a week over a period of 3 weeks, a record will be made and a letter will be sent informing parents of this concern. Should

persistent lateness continue, parents will be invited in for a meeting to look at how we can work together to overcome this issue.

Frequent lateness has a detrimental impact on the child's learning as over time they can miss out on a significant amount of their education. Lateness can also have a detrimental effect on the child's mental well-being. See the illustration below.



7. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

7.1 Absences for illness

Parents must contact the school office by 9:00am on the first day of illness either via the ParentApp or by phoning/emailing the School Office. Parents are asked to keep the school updated at least every other day for the duration of the illness.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school as a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school will ask parents/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

7.2 Absence for Medical Appointments

Parents are advised to book medical appointments outside of school hours where possible. If this is not possible, parents are asked to notify school before the appointment so that the attendance register can be amended to show why the child is not in school.

Medical or dental appointments will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance.

7.3 Holiday Requests

Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education.

If a leave of absence is requested during term time parents/carers must complete a leave of absence request form in advance of the trip (at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Head Teacher, and they will use their discretion whilst applying government recommendations. The Head Teacher can only grant an authorised absence in exceptional circumstances.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To obtain a leave of absence form from the school office.
- To complete and submit the form in advance of the period of absence (4 weeks prior to the intended trip).

If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without the Head Teacher's authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised.

Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued by the school for unauthorised holiday absence during term time. More information about these can be found under the heading; Legal Sanctions.

7.4 Requests for other reasons

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Absences for close family bereavement may be authorised by the Head Teacher. These requests must be discussed with the school.
- Absences for close family members' weddings or funerals will be limited to one day's authorised absence, if granted.
- Other 'exceptional circumstances' where the Headteacher may authorise absence.

8. Follow up for unexplained absence

If no reason has been given for absence then this will show up as 'N'. These children can be identified quickly, enabling follow up calls to be made. Please see the table below.

Timescale	Action
By approx. 9:30 if no contact has been made with the school:	Priority 1 to be contacted. Voicemail left if no answer.
No more than 30 minutes after initial contact:	Second call to Priority 1. If no response has been received from Priority 1 then Priority 2 will be contacted. Voicemail left if no answer.
Immediately after calling Priority 2:	If no contact from Priority 1 or 2 has been received then Priority 3 will be contacted.
No more than 30 minutes later:	Should no contact have been received to give a reason for the absence, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and the Attendance Officer will attend the child's known address to conduct a Safe and Well check.
Immediately after visit:	If no child has been seen and there has still been no reason for absence given, should the DSL have cause to believe this is a safeguarding concern, the Police will be called to conduct a Safe and Well check. This will be logged on the school's safeguarding records. Should there be no cause to believe there is a safeguarding concern, a letter addressed to the parents/cares will be left advising them to make contact with school and confirming the expectations of parents when a child is absent. The school will continue to call/visit the known address on each day that the absence continues without explanation and will consider involving the EWO.

9. Persistent absenteeism

Attendance is monitored on regular basis by the Assistant Head Teacher and Attendance Officer. If attendance drops below 92% we consider it to be a concern. At this point we will write to parents to inform them of the attendance concern. If no improvement is seen then it may be considered necessary to involve the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

Below is a table outlining the response from the school for persistent absenteeism.

Concern	Action
Attendance has fallen to 92% or below or pattern of unauthorised attendance noticed:	Letter sent to parents.
If no improvement seen and remains a concern:	Attendance Officer to write to parents.
If further decline in attendance has been seen:	Meeting to be held with parents and Attendance Officer.
Continued concerns:	Meeting to be held with parents and School and Attendance Officer. Advice sought from EWO. Warning of prosecution.
No improvements seen:	Prosecution process begins.

10. Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice will take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year. Where a child has received 12 or more unauthorised absences (6 school days) over a period of 12 weeks or less, this will result in a fixed penalty notice.
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission. Unauthorised holidays of 6 school days or more will result in a fixed penalty notice.
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

11. Attendance Monitoring

At Millfields we believe that attendance and safeguarding are intrinsically linked. The DSL works with the attendance officer to analyse patterns and trends of attendance in order to safeguard children.

The attendance of children from Reception to Year 4 is monitored using Scholarpack. The following systems are in place for addressing attendance:

- At least every half term an attendance tracker is produced showing every child's percentage attendance.
- The Attendance Officer along with the Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Assistant Head look at children's attendance under 95% with a particular focus on those under 92%.
- Parents may be contacted either by letter or phone informing them that their child's attendance and/or punctuality is low and a meeting may be requested.
- Minutes are taken from that meeting.

The purpose of these meetings are to:

- Make parents aware of their child's attendance and/or punctuality.
- Ensure parents are aware that a referral to the EWO may be necessary if there are a significant number of unauthorised absences.
- Discuss reasons for absence.
- Look at additional support that may be available, eg. Family Support, School Nurse.
- Look at strategies for promoting good attendance, eg. Reward charts.
- Raise awareness of the impact of good attendance on pupil outcomes.
- Ensure that parents understand the impact and possible consequences of further absence.

12. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Regularly review the attendance policy and ensure that it is read and followed by all school staff.
- Ensure the policy is available to parents via the school website
- Promote the importance of attendance through the school newsletters
- Ensure accurate use of Scholarpack and use the data to monitor trends and intervene early where attendance is becoming a concern.
- Communicate effectively with parents where their child's attendance is becoming a concern and work in partnership to improve attendance.
- Staff to develop positive relationships with children and therefore ensuring that children want to come to school
- Where possible remove identified barriers for children where attendance is becoming a concern.
- Provide a well-planned curriculum with exciting opportunities so that children want to come to school.

13. Reporting attendance to parents

- Attendance is reported to parents via their child's school report in July
- Parents will be contacted at any point throughout the school year if the attendance of their child becomes a concern

13.1 Attendance Percentages

Attendance Percentage	Days missed over a school year
100%	0 Days missed
95%	10 Days missed
90%	20 Days missed
85%	30 Days missed
80%	40 Days missed

14. Children with health needs who cannot attend school

The Medical Education Team discharges the duty of the Local Authority in ensuring that arrangements are in place for pupils who are unable to attend school because of their medical needs, to have appropriate and ongoing access to education.

The Team consists of qualified teachers and teaching assistants who are skilled in teaching pupils of statutory school age with a wide range of physical, emotional and psychological health needs.

14.1 The Medical Education Team provides (MET)

- advice to schools on the procedures to be followed when a pupil is absent from school as a result of medical needs
- education from the fifteenth day of absence from school (consecutive or cumulative) or from the first day when illness is recurrent or prolonged
- a range of educational provision, tailored to the individual needs of each pupil and detailed in Personal Education Plans
- regular monitoring and evaluation of pupil progress
- tuition in a range of settings if professionals involved with the CYP and the MET agree this is appropriate to meet need
- reintegration planning and support as appropriate
- close liaison with school based and external partner agencies and professionals including CAMHS and other health professionals

Pupils will remain on the roll of the school, which retains overall responsibility for their education whilst they are unable to attend due to medical reasons.

This policy links to other policies:

SEND

Behaviour (including anti-bullying)

Safeguarding

Child Protection