



The Mayflower Federation

Attendance Policy

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Whole school Attendance Policy

Introduction

The publication of school's attendance levels is a significant indicator of a school's performance. Regular attendance of pupils correlates closely to raising achievement thus underlying the importance of improving attendance rates in schools. All staff should be committed to the successful implementation of the whole school attendance policy as a necessary step towards improving overall attendance as part of the School Improvement Plan. If children are to derive maximum benefit from their education, they must attend school regularly and on time.

The Federation is committed to providing full and efficient education to all pupils. We recognise that if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance are crucial. Problems which impede punctuality and regular attendance, will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible. The Federation is sensitive to the needs of families and will endeavour to communicate as openly and supportively as possible. We can only do our best work in conjunction with the support of parents/carers. The Federation is committed to working with other agencies e.g. GP surgeries, health visitors etc, in order to secure the best attendance for its children.

At the Federation, priority will be given to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. The vital role of parents to pupils' attendance is recognised. Where there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance, the Federation will investigate and strive, in partnership with parents and pupils, to resolve problems quickly and efficiently. The aim is always focused on returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

SECTION 1

Day to day routines

- All schools are required to call attendance registers at the start of the morning sessions and at the start of the afternoon session to record pupils present and absent. The attendance register is a legal document and it is imperative that it is accurate at all times. Registers can be used in a court of law.
- All pupils must have an appropriate mark by their name. The registers are recorded directly onto the schools' pupil database. **Teachers should also mark a paper copy to confirm the numbers of pupil's present in the event of a fire – am and pm.**
- Teachers must ensure that the register is taken on time. The register should be completed by **9:15am**
- **PM** registers should be completed by **2:00pm**
- In cases of a pupil being sent home ill, a note should be made in the online register
- INSET days or school closures will be indicated with appropriate code added by admin staff
- Where a child has a high (5 days in a half term) level of absence due to ill health, the school will inform the parents that they will be invited in for a meeting with the Attendance Lead

SECTION 2

Authorised and unauthorised absence

The Federation will monitor and support pupils to maintain regular school attendance. The register must show whether any absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences are treated as unauthorised. **Schools, not parents, authorise absences.**

- Absence should be authorised where appropriate, and when notification has been received, should be noted on the system, using the standardised symbols outlined. **Under no circumstances should an unnotified/unverified absence be regarded as authorised**
- By law only the school can authorise an absence. A written note or telephone explanation by a parent/carer does not, in itself, oblige the school to authorise the absence if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. All reasons for absence must be recorded in the register and notes filed in an agreed place. There must be consistency throughout the school in what is authorised – but it is recognised that individual circumstances may influence the decision to unauthorise an absence

The following table outlines categories of absence which can be authorised. For the most up to date absence codes please consult www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance

Type of absence	Symbol	Comment
Medical or dental appointment If in excess of 5 days per half term, a doctor's certificate will be required, or at the Federation's discretion	M	• This only applies where the pupil is absent from registration. Where the pupil attends registration but then leaves the school, the pupil is marked as present. • Pupils and families should be encouraged to make appointments outside school hours • The school health service (Michelle Nightingale) will be contacted if absences become unreasonable and health reasons are given in explanation
Illness (NOT medical or dental appointments)	I	• This code is always to be used when parents phone to say that their child is ill. Parents should always be advised to notify the school as soon as possible when a child is ill. It could also be used when parents send a letter after the period of illness to explain the child's absence. • A stay in hospital
Religious Observance	R	• This is observance of a day by a religious body to which the parents belong • Parents should be encouraged to give advanced warning
Interview (employment or educational admission)	J1	• Year 6 may have interviews, tests or attend open days for secondary schools • Nursery children may have induction days or taster sessions at their new schools • Advanced notice is expected
Dual registered pupils	D	• A pupil is registered at two schools when there is an intention for the pupil to return to mainstream school. • Both institutions are responsible and should mark the pupil as present and absent accordingly • When reporting attendance to parents, the attendance at both institutions is taken into account
Alternative provision (LA arranged)	K	• The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil.

Family Holidays (Please see additional section) Extended Family Holiday	G	- It is The Federation's policy to encourage 100% attendance at school. Therefore parents should not take holidays in term time - Each request should be considered individually. Parents should be reminded of the effects of absence in terms of the progress the child is making and interruption to the programme of work
Holiday NOT agreed or in excess of agreement	G	
Exclusion	E	- Absence is authorised for the period of the exclusion - In case of permanent exclusion there are set points where a child's name can be removed from the school roll
Traveller children when the family is travelling	T	- Travellers must NOT be removed from the roll of a school whilst travelling. Dual registration is allowed - Whilst travelling, the school place is held open and the absence is authorised - Attendance at school is the priority over use of distance learning packs.
Educated off site	B	- Attending 'taster' days at other schools. - Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity provided 'off site' can notify the school of any absences by individual pupils so that the school can record the pupil absence using the appropriate code.
Educational visit or trip	V	- Field trips, visits, approved sporting activities – these only apply when the activity prevents the pupil from attending registration. A register should be taken on the field trip or visit to confirm each pupil's attendance - Includes residential trips
Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	C	- Schools may authorise absence of 3 days per academic year for young carers. Where education is affected on a long term/permanent basis, there should be a consideration of a referral to EWS to seek family support - Schools have the discretion to authorise absence due to family bereavement – 3 days per academic year.
Special occasions Other authorised circumstances	C1	- These are cases where each individual occasion for each pupil is considered on its merits e.g. taking part in a public performance - Authorisation should not be given if the event will become regular, if no advance request was made or if the overall attendance is poor.
C2 - Temporary Reduced Timetable	C2	School places a compulsory school age pupil on a part timetable as part of re-integration, then the school is authorising the pupil's absence from the session
Approved sporting activity	P	The pupil is participating in or attending an approved sporting activity that is supervised in that behalf by the Headteacher of the school
Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements by LA	Q	
Non-compulsory school age absence	X	Pupils who have not attained the age of 5 years at the start of term in which the session takes place.
Y Other unavoidable absence	- Y1 - Y2 - Y3 - Y4 - Y5 - Y6 - Y7	- Unable to attend (transport normally provided not available) - Unable to attend (widespread disruption to travel) - Unable to attend (part of the school closed) - Unable to attend (whole school closed) - Unable to attend (sentence of detention) - Absent in accordance with public health guidance or law - Unable to attend - any other unavoidable cause
Pupil not yet on roll	Z	School may store details of pupils who are to be admitted in a 'pre-admission' group

		which is then 'rolled' forward at the start of term. • If the pupil does not turn up at the official start date then they will be shown as unauthorised absent and the LEA should be advised
School closed to pupils	#	• Between terms • Half terms • Occasional days when the whole school are on holiday • Teacher INSET days • Use of schools as polling stations

Requests for special leave and overseas visits during term time

Taking your child out of school during term time, without the school's permission could result in a fixed penalty notice of £80 per parent, being issued.

The general rule is no holidays will be authorised during term time. **There is no parental right to a ten-day period and schools are not obliged to agree to family holidays during term time.** The ten day period merely reflects the remit of the school to authorise the absence. Where pupils of compulsory school age are concerned, all applications should be carefully considered on their merits in the light of the need to maintain continuity of learning e.g. A day's Observance of a religious holiday is likely to be approved, whereas booking holidays during term time because it is cheaper, is likely to be rejected. **Only in exceptional circumstances will special leave be granted in any one school year.** All requests for special leave during term time should be made in writing to the following:

Miss H Hayes/Miss L Joines – for Phoenix
Mr D Ogunsola- Ilderton

Extenuating circumstances that may lead to unintentional extension of special leave

The Federation recognises that there may be extenuating and exceptional circumstances that occur during special leave, which may mean that the family/child are unable to return to school on the agreed date. Such circumstances may include:

- Flights being cancelled or rerouted
- Illness preventing members of the family flying
- Freak weather conditions leading to a flight being cancelled or delayed.
- Death of a family member whilst on special leave

In any of these circumstances, upon the child's return – **The Federation is only able to authorise the absence if the following documents are produced, confirming what has happened:**

- A letter from the airline, within a month of your return, on their headed paper, confirming that the family's flight had been delayed, oversold, cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. One of the circumstances may be freak weather conditions.

- A letter from the doctor, with their name and telephone number stating the medical reasons why the person couldn't fly on the flight scheduled.

For further information, please refer to the below link:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

Unauthorised absence

Type of absence	Code	Comment
Unauthorised absence not covered by any other code or description	O	• Pupil's/parent's/sibling's birthday • Shopping • Hair cut • Market day • Couldn't get up
No reason yet provided for absence	N	• Every endeavour should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence from school. Until a reason is obtained, the absence must be coded using Code N. If no reason for absence provided after a reasonable amount of time, Code N should be replaced with Code O
Holiday taken without authorisation OR extended holiday taken without prior authorisation Usually results in a fixed penalty notice of £60 per child	G	• Absence is unauthorised if the school does not agree • Schools may agree a period of exceeding 10 days only in the most exceptional circumstances • Absence is unauthorised beyond the point of expected return if the pupil has been permitted to take a holiday and does not return when due. The DFEs advise that a pupil can be taken off roll

Examples of absence that is unauthorised:

- Child's or family members' birthday/s
- Shopping trips
- Where there are excessive amounts of authorised absence due to illness (at the school's discretion but usually 5 or more days in a half term period)
- Where the child has gone to bed late and has 'slept in'
- Parent/carer has an appointment and takes child with them
- Another child in the family is ill, so all are kept off school
- The child has to look after a younger sibling/child on a school day
- Picking up someone from an airport – except where this is part of an agreed leave of absence with the school

SECTION 3

Lateness

Punctuality is monitored through registers. Pupils are expected to arrive at school at 8:55am, and registered at 9:00am. After 9:00 pupils are marked late at the late gate. Staff will issue a late slip, which must be given to the class teacher. This lets the teacher know that the child has been registered. If a child goes to class without a slip the teachers must inform the office.

Lateness	Comments	Code
Arrival between 9:00 and 9:30am Registers still open	Pupils who arrive during the registration period but with acceptable reasons for lateness are counted as present, but late	L
Arrival after 9:31am Registers closed	Pupils who arrive after close of registers with unacceptable reasons, the absence is unauthorised	U

Acceptable reasons for lateness could include:

- Health appointment (recorded as code M)
- Exceptional transport problems – over and above what is the norm e.g. the excuse of the bus was late will only be acceptable if the bus is not normally late.
- Exceptional weather – e.g. severe flooding, heavy snowfall

Lateness at the end of the day

This is a separate policy – all enquiries about this should be made to Head of School on either school site.

Children Uncollected from School Policy

SECTION 4

Resolving school attendance problems

The Federation believe that where attendance problems occur the key to successfully resolving these problems is engaging the child through collaborative working between the parent and the school. The Federation believe that the best way to resolve attendance issues, is on a voluntary basis, with the school being supportive to the families concerned. If, however, issues cannot be resolved this way, then the school may refer problems to the Local Education Authority and Inclusion Team.

Monitoring attendance: ABSENCE

- On the first day of absence – Parents will phone the school before 10:00am on the morning of the first absence to give a reason for the absence. Federation staff, (usually in the office on each site) will make a phone call home in the instances where parents do not make contact with the school to find out the reason for absence
- Where we are not able to ascertain a reason for the absence on the day, it will be recorded as code N in the register. This code will remain for 1 week, giving parents/carers a chance to inform the school of the reason for absence. If no reason is given during this time, the code N will become a code O, meaning ‘no reason given for the absence’. Code O is an unauthorised absence.
- Please see section 5 below for the consequences of excessive absence and what happens after we have monitored the attendance of every child every half term.

Monitoring attendance: PUNCTUALITY

- ‘Late Gates’ are done every day on each Federation site.
- Code L is recorded on the register if a child is late but before 9:30. Code U is recorded on the register if a child is late at 9:31 and after. Both codes are classed as unauthorised absence. Time will be taken from the clock in the school office, or the person conducting the recording of lateness.

Monitoring attendance: SICKNESS

- After the third consecutive day of absence due to sickness the school will request medical evidence to authorise the absence.
- If the amount of absence due to sickness is below PA (90%), the school will request medical evidence for **any** days off sick.
- Any child whose attendance is less than 90% in a half term period will have their attendance record looked at closely for the academic year. If it is due to sickness, a general letter will be issued reminding parents of the policy to bring in medical evidence after the third consecutive day. If the level of sickness absence remains below 90%, parents/carers will be asked to sign a Parent contract with a target of at least 95% attendance for the following 2-week period. If that target is not met over the 2-week period, we will ask for medical evidence for all absences due to illness and will consult with the the Local Authority Education Inclusion Team

SECTION 5

Penalty Notices Explained

‘Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. **The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.’

Failure to adhere to the Headteachers decision about term time leave requests may lead to a penalty notice being served.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

‘Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.’

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

Criteria for court/court panel

The Federation works closely with Southwark Attendance team to ensure that we are following the correct process. The Federation gives plenty of warning to parents and carers about their child’s unsatisfactory attendance. Court panel usually results from the following actions:

- Several warning letters have been written to parents over the half term periods and there has been no improvement in attendance so it is maintained on or around 85%
- The parents may have been fined several times but there has been no significant and/or sustained improvement and the attendance continues to be on or around 85%
- The parents will have received 2 court warning letters
- The school will have provided support for the child and the family as appropriate and this has not been taken up e.g. the parents has not signed the consent forms needed, the parent has not turned up to appointments at the school

All cases of children on roll but not attending, poor attendance and lateness are dealt with under section 444 of 1996 Education Act, through the use of first and second court warning notices – issued by the welfare officer as part of the ‘5 major contacts’ procedures.

All cases of children not enrolled are dealt with under Section 443 of the 1996 Education Act, through the use of the Attendance Order Procedure.

The LEA can also apply for an Education Supervision Order under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989, to assist parents/carers to carry out their parental responsibility by working in partnership.

If the unsatisfactory improvement after one term is due to difficulties not attributable to the parents, the Team Manager will advise.

SECTION 6

Roles of those involved with attendance and punctuality

Teachers

- Will ensure that all registers are taken accurately, and submitted online to the office on time
- Teachers will maintain paper registers, to keep in their classroom, for fire safety purposes
- They will form positive links with parents; positively promote good attendance within the classroom, communicate with Heads of School

Office staff

- In the instances where parents/carers have not informed the school of a reason for child's absence, the office will phone parents/carers on the morning of first absence to ask for an explanation – phone calls made will be recorded on the system, including those where no contact was actually made.
- Will notify Heads of School/ Attendance lead for each site, of any patterns of lateness and attendance that are causing concern
- Will form positive links with parents and outside agencies.
- Will set up the registers at the beginning of the school year
- Receive telephone communication from parents/carers, will record that information correctly and arrange for that to be communicated to the attendance lead for consideration or authorisation
- Assist the attendance lead in the collection of data
- Assist the attendance lead with the admission and off rolling procedures
- Assist in the co-ordination of late gate, including cover when needed
- Will notify the attendance lead of any patterns of lateness and attendance that are causing concern

The Attendance Leads

- Will oversee the implementation of the attendance policies and procedures
- Ensure the collection of accurate statistical data, monitor, analyse and evaluate data collected
- Form positive links with outside agencies such as the EWS and Social Services and parents
- Will refer pupils to the EIT, (Education Inclusion Team,) using the referral form/consultation
- Report regularly to the governing body on attendance.

The Governing Body

- Will see that the registers are properly kept by having oversight of attendance, ensuring the attendance policy is implemented, have oversight of off rolled children and the procedures of Persistent Absenteeism.
- Ensure that regular returns of attendance figures are made to Southwark
- Produce an annual report to parents/carers in which the school's attendance figures are included.
- Challenge Attendance figures and seek reassurance that the schools are implementing policy

The Education Welfare Service (Education Inclusion Team service)

- The EWS will work in accordance with the guidelines, policies and conditions of service of Southwark Council and the LEA.

- Will maintain confidentiality in accordance with council policies. Any information relating to parental contacts or other agency involvement outside the school, *will* be shared with the school unless specific consent has not been given to the EWS
- Will assess pupils within 2 weeks of a referral – such cases will necessitate a family intervention plan to be drawn up, and this will be reviewed on a 6 weekly basis. An assessment could include home visits, office interviews, telephone contact with families and discussion with the school or other agencies.
- Written records summarising ‘agreed action’ will be kept for each EWS visit.
- Will make referrals to court as and when necessary

Roles and responsibilities of the school, parents/carers and pupils

Pupils will:

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive on time

Parents/carers will:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly (at least 96%)
- Ensure their child arrives on time for school
- Contact the school on the first day of absence, if their child is unable to attend for a valid reason and/or provide a note if they wish the absence to be considered for authorisation
- Ensure their child is prepared with the necessary uniform to attend school
- Support the school in its aim to raise the achievement of their child through full school attendance
- Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers are ultimately responsible for ensuring that their child/children attend and stay at school

The Federation will:

- Ensure efficient and accurate registration of pupils
- Contact the parents/carers if a child fails to attend without a satisfactory explanation.
- Provide regular reports on the school's attendance statistics
- Promote positive attendance by taking account of pupil's individual needs
- Have in place clear communication routes to discuss any difficulties which may be preventing a pupil from attending school.
- Expect parents and carers to support the school to raise the achievement of their child through full school attendance

Southwark Education/EWS will:

- Ensure that parents/carers are fulfilling their statutory obligations as to their child's education including, where necessary, taking action through the courts (section 444 of Education Act 1996). Conviction following an offence under section 444 attracts a fine of up to £1000
- Also apply, if necessary, to the Family proceedings court for an Education Supervision Order (section 36 of the Children Act 1989). This will apply to cases of unauthorised absence invoking statutory backing for a planned programme for a child in collaboration with the parents/carers. The effects of an ESO will be to place a child under the supervision of the LEA for a specifically defined period. At this time EWO are designated by the LEA to be the names Supervising Officers in such cases. As such they are required to advise, assist and befriend the child, reinforce parental responsibility and give reasonable direction to ensure the child's proper education.

SECTION 6

Promoting positive attendance

At The Federation, we give high priority to the collecting and publicising of data related to attendance and punctuality. We have a consistent and supportive attitude towards attendance and punctuality, and wish above all, to resolve any problems on a voluntary basis. We firmly believe that establishing contact with home on the first day of absence is crucial to improving our attendance figures, and the quality and consistency of the education each child receives. All parents/carers know what are grounds for authorisation of absence and the attendance policy is explained to parents/carers when the child is admitted to the school.

We record and promote good attendance in the following ways:

- Whole school assembly
- Attendance and punctuality figures are recorded on the report to Parents and Carers at the end of the academic year, along with positive comments for effort where appropriate
- Attendance and punctuality certificates are given out for 100% attendance and punctuality at the end of each half term
- We ensure our parents/carers receive accurate termly and clear information about the child's education and how important it is that pupils attend school.