

Millbrook Community Primary School

Attendance Policy 2020/21

Updated: May 2020

Approved by Governors: Awaiting approval

Review date: May 2021

Responsible Person: Head Teacher Mrs J M Maloney

At **Millbrook Community Primary School**, we recognise that attending school regularly has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life opportunities and chances for children.

The school cannot work in isolation. The partnership of school, parents and the Local Authority is fundamental, with all involved accepting responsibility and working together to improve attendance for the benefit of the pupils and the community.

Prompt action on non-attendance and accurate consistent registration are important areas of child protection

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance.

If there are problems affecting a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents, pupils and relevant support agencies to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

The Department for Education (DfE) guidance states that all schools should have an effective system and procedures in place to encourage regular attendance and are able to investigate the underlying causes of poor attendance, which should be set out in an attendance policy.

Millbrook Community Primary School aims to:

- Achieve 96% attendance weekly
- Improve the overall percentage of attendance of pupils in our school
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone including pupils, parents, staff and governors
- Continue to develop and implement a system of rewards and sanctions
- Continue to provide support, advice and guidance to pupils and parents
- Continue to develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- Continue to promote effective partnership with the School Attendance Service and other support services and agencies
- Continue to develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
- Recognise the need of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following a significant period of absence

At **Millbrook Community Primary School** we have an established weekly system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the effort of pupils to improve their attendance and punctuality and we challenge the behaviour of those pupils and their parents/carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

We firmly believe that if children are to make the most of the opportunities offered to them in school then it is necessary for them to attend regularly and to be punctual.

Category	Threshold Attendance	Actual Attendance	Whole Days Absent	Learning Hours Lost
Excellent	100%	190 days	0	0
	99%	188 days	2	10
Good	98%	186 days	4	20
	97%	184 days	6	30
	96%	182.5 days	7.5	37.5
Cause for concern	95%	180.5 days	9.5	47.5
	94%	179 days	11	55
	93%	177 days	13	65
	92%	175 days	15	75
	91%	173 days	17	85
Serious cause for concern	90%	171 days	19	95
	89%	169 days	21	105
	88%	167 days	23	115
	87%	165 days	25	125
	86%	163 days	27	135
Critical	85%	161.5 days	28.5	142.5
	84%	159.5 days	30.5	152.5
	83%	158 days	32	160
	82%	156 days	34	170
	81%	154 days	36	180
	80%	152 days	38	190

Registration

Children should ideally be on the yard for **08:45** and ready to line up to go to class for registration at **08:50** any time after that it will be recorded as late (**L**). The register closes at **09:20** and arriving after that time will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (**U**) for the morning although it recognises that the child was physically present on site at some point in the morning.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher then returned to the Attendance Officer.

Definitions of authorised and unauthorised absences

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent 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.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- The parent or carer has not contacted the school with a good reason or the school cannot contact them. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- The child has arrived after the register has closed. The fact the U code is classed as an unauthorised absence means that when it is used pupils are likely to be missing significant amounts of schooling; putting their educational progress at risk. Unauthorised absence can attract the interest of external agencies, including referral to the local authority attendance team and consideration of the use of legal measures.

Leave of Absence

Following the September 2013 amendment to The Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006, schools cannot authorise any leave other than in exceptional circumstances. In **Millbrook Community Primary School**, **Mrs Maloney** is the only person authorised by the Governing body, to make this decision. If the leave is being requested for a holiday, approval should be obtained **prior** to making any bookings.

Leave of absence SHALL NOT be granted unless:

- A request for leave has been made in advance, by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and
- The Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES relating to the request.

Children Missing from Education can be a potential sign of abuse or neglect including sexual exploitation, undergoing female genital mutilation, forced marriage or travelling to conflict zones.

- ALL staff to follow school procedures when a child misses' education particularly on repeat occasions to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect
- The school Attendance Policy is up to date, reviewed annually and includes reference to CME 2
- There is an admissions policy and an attendance register
- The Local Authority is informed of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more
- Work alongside other multi-agencies Statutory and Non-Statutory in respect of individual children and families.
- Involving the Court Office when appropriate re: possible Fixed Penalty Notice

Education Penalty Notices can be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.

School will initially send a warning letter to the parent on school headed paper. The letter will refer to recent/current unauthorised absence and warn of an **EPN** if the threshold of **14 sessions (7 days)** is reached within a ten week period, this may span more than one term. ***In law a parent is guilty of an offence if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered.***

- If leave of absence has not been requested, a warning letter and fine may be issued
- In the case of a leave of absence, a separate Penalty Notice will be sent to each known address of both parents.
- Where an unauthorised absence has been dealt with by way of an EPN and it has been paid, it is not possible for a parent to be prosecuted for the same period of unauthorised absence.

Throughout this policy, the term **'parent'** used to refer to an individual who falls within the definition of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996. This includes all biological parents, whether they are married or not; Any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child (as defined by the Children's Act 1989); and any person who although not a biological parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means a person with whom a child lives and looks after, irrespective of what that relationship is with that child.

School refusal you should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to resolve it.

Colluding with your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse. School refusal/school phobia is a psychological condition that has usually, been medically diagnosed. Other arrangements can be put in place for a child with a genuine school phobia. If you have concerns about your child contact the Attendance Officer immediately and openly discuss your worries. There could be several reasons why your child is refusing to attend therefore, it is important that we identify the reason and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

Pupils and pupil groups that may be vulnerable

Possible problems that may lead to non-attendance are:

- Parentally condoned unjustified absence
- Bullying
- Unrecognised SEN difficulties
- Abuse or neglect
- Pupil dissatisfaction
- Inappropriate curriculum for child
- Burdens of domestic responsibilities

The school has a clear zero tolerance with respect to bullying or similar behaviour. See policy

Children who are looked after (LAC), subject to a Child protection Plan (CP) or Children in Need (CIN) will be treated with highest priority and will be known to the Attendance Officer. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home. Any outside professionals who are working with the child/children and family will also be notified of the absence (Social Worker, AAP, Knowsley Attendance Service etc) Children with Special Educational needs (SEND) will be treated with similar priority in order that their time in school can be maximised, and their learning supported to the greatest extent possible. The school has different strategies for different age groups, gender and groups of pupils whose non-attendance may have different causes.

Referral to agencies for support

Early Help

Early identification of needs and support required can prevent concerns escalating. Early Help plans should have focussed outcomes for children and families and should be actively planned with them. Plans should deliver evidence-based interventions, and clear thresholds for specific agency interventions e.g. Social care, housing, mental health services. We see how Early Help can transform a child in school, not just what they are able to achieve academically, but how their personal, social and emotional development can thrive with the right support. We are committed to Early Help because it is the right thing to do for our children to give them the best start in life.

Equal Opportunities

The school will consider cultural, social and educational factors when implementing this policy. Every attempt will be made to ensure that no child or family will be treated unfairly because of underlying cultural, social or educational factors.