



# Attendance Policy

Reviewed– Annually	Full Governors
Reviewed: Term 1 2024	

## **Rationale**

At Monkton Park Primary School we understand that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. School is the foundation for preparing children and young people for life as adults.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly and punctually. Parents and the school community share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

This policy represents our commitment to support pupils to achieve excellent attendance. It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will undertake. Strategies to improve attendance and rewards and benefits of good attendance and the sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor attendance and punctuality are also detailed. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

### **Purpose**

- Ensure that children and young people make the best use of their educational opportunities by attending regularly, punctually and in a state of readiness for learning
- Emphasise a commitment to promoting excellent attendance and punctuality
- Establish a consistent framework to improve attendance for all pupils
- Ensure that everyone within the school community understand the issues and procedures for attendance
- Fulfil the statutory duties in relation to school attendance
- To encourage and recognise good attendance

We believe that the foundation for good attendance is based on a strong partnership between school, parents and the child. This includes clear communication with parents and pupils regarding our expectations of what is required to secure excellent attendance for pupils at our school.

At Monkton Park Primary School we will:

- Provide regular information about attendance through regular communications through our parent newsletter and through the Arbor parent app
- Include attendance information in reports about your child's performance in school and how any absence may be affecting their attainment
- Work with you and your child to achieve maximum attendance

At Monkton Park Primary School we expect:

- Pupils to arrive at school every day on time, ready to learn
- Parents to work with the school to ensure that their child attends regularly

## **The Legal Framework – roles and responsibilities**

The law says that ensuring a child receives education is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act). For most parents this means registering their child at a school. Permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law and parents/carers who do not secure their child's regular attendance at school may be referred to the Wiltshire Education Welfare Service for a formal legal intervention.

To avoid this happening, we will work with parents and carers to address irregular or poor attendance to ensure full-time attendance.

Authorised absences are those that have been agreed by the headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those where no valid reason has been provided for absence or those absences which the headteacher has not agreed.

## **Partnership Working- Roles and Responsibilities**

Research suggests that a pupil who misses 17 days of school a year will drop 1 GCSE grade in attainment. (DfE)

95% equates to half a day off every two weeks in a school year

90% equates to a day off every two weeks in a school year

85% equates to one and a half days off every two weeks in a school year

80% equates to one whole day off every week in a school year

A secondary age pupil whose attendance is 80% will have missed ONE WHOLE YEAR of education by the time they leave school

“Better attendance at school by pupils improves their educational achievements and, in turn, their lives and prospects. Even a small reduction in absence would result in many pupils receiving greater benefit from their education.” The National Audit Office.

At Monkton Park, school attendance is the business of everyone in our school community.

The governors and all staff are committed to supporting all pupils to achieve excellent attendance and regularly review school procedures and strategies to support this.

We expect that parents and carers will work with us if school absence becomes a concern. Parents and carers can help to promote positive attendance by:

- Ensuring children arrive at school on time, before registers close, appropriately dressed and in a 'condition to learn' (ie not too tired or too hungry) and with the right equipment for the day
- Working in partnership with us to help their child(ren) gain an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- Working in partnership with us to take an active interest in their child's education

- Working in partnership with us and other agencies (as appropriate) to resolve problems relating to non-attendance or which may have a negative impact on their child's attendance

## Procedures

Legally the school register must be taken twice a day. At Monkton Park Primary school the register is taken by 8.50am (morning registration time) and once during the afternoon session at 1pm. The registers will remain open for 20 minutes. Pupils arriving before registers close will be marked as late (L). Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (Late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence for the whole session.

Absence is recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as unauthorised. Ongoing and repeated lateness after the close of registration is considered as unauthorised absence and may be taken into account if any legal action is taken.

We will contact parents by letter to address and improve attendance where:

A pupil's attendance falls below 90% (90% is classed as persistent absence and below 50% is classed as severe absence)

A pupil is frequently late to school (defined 10% late marks in a term)

In addition parents will receive an attendance update three times a year as part of our mid year and end of year reports. Where attendance is below 95% this will be highlighted that it is of concern.

Attendance is tracked and monitored on a weekly basis and parents will be contacted where a pupil has a regular pattern of absence or lateness.

As part of this approach we adopt an early support approach to improving attendance and lateness. This includes:

- Daily check of any children with 'N' codes and monitoring any children of concern completed by family link worker and office staff
- Weekly analysis of attendance. Figures are completed by the attendance officer (admin team) and any attendance concerns or trends identified
- Termly review of attendance with headteacher, family link worker and attendance officer (admin team)
- Termly letters sent to parents of children who at risk of becoming a persistent absentee sent by the end of week 3 in each term (not including term 1)
- Termly letters sent to parents of children who are persistently late to school sent by the end of week 3 in each term (not including term 1)
- Family Link Worker to make follow up phone calls to offer further support
- Where early intervention measures are unsuccessful we utilise the flow chart actions in Appendix A

Parents are asked to:

Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first and subsequent days of absence. Parents should make contact with school before the start of the school day.

Keep the school informed, in cases of ongoing absence. A note from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always remain with the school

Arrange medical or dental appointments outside of school hours unless there is urgent need for an appointment.

Tell the school if their child is going to be late, the reason why and expected time of arrival.

### **Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.**

The process for requesting leave of absence is explained further in this policy.

We will contact the parent/carer if a child is absent and the parent/carer has not advised that the child will not be in school. Parents can expect contact on every occasion of an un-notified absence. The attendance manager will initially phone parents within 30 minutes of registers closing. If we cannot speak directly with parents/carers then we will make contact with nominated emergency contacts to establish the reason for absence; this is in line with school safeguarding procedures.

If after **3 days** of absence, your child has not been seen and no contact has been made with the school, a home visit will be made by school staff, to ascertain the safety and well-being of your child and establish the reason for absence from school.

After **10 days** of unexplained absence and no contact with the school, we are obliged to notify the local authority. The local authority will follow their procedures for Children Missing from Education (CME) and parents may expect contact and visits from an Education Welfare Officer to ascertain the well-being and safety of your child.

### **Collecting your child from school**

We ask that all parents/carers ensure that they are able to collect their children from school on time. School finishes at 3.10pm

If parents are unable to collect their child as usual then they will need to communicate the alternative arrangements they have made with the school.

We will not release children in these circumstances to anyone who we have not been advised of.

If children remain uncollected from school we will phone the parent to understand why the child has not been picked up. The child will wait in our school reception area until the parent has arrived.

### **Monitoring attendance and lateness**

Weekly monitoring of the registers will be made by the Senior Attendance Champion and/or the attendance officer, to analyse overall absence for each pupil and identify pupils with

low attendance, a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA), Severe Absence (SA) patterns and levels of broken weeks, lateness, authorised absence and unauthorised absence and reasons for absence. A termly strategic attendance meeting will also be made to review attendance and the success of associated actions.

A pupil is classed as a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year and as a severe absentee if they miss more than 50% of schooling for whatever reason, whether it be authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and encouragement to tackle it. PA and SA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we combine this with tracking academic progress to assess the effect on the pupil's attainment. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a pupil by creating gaps in his or her learning. The Senior Attendance Champion, together with attendance office/pastoral manager will be responsible for putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. Initially we will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers and this may involve requesting medical evidence in order for the school to authorise any further absence due to ill health and/or an attendance meeting with a member of school staff where we can discuss the barriers to attendance and provide help and support to address that. We may ask parents to agree to an Attendance Contract which details how we will work together to improve attendance. However, if absence continues and the support we have offered is not working we may make a referral to the Local Authority for additional intervention.

### **Requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances**

In accordance with Department for Education statutory guidance, leave of absence from school may only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Absence for the purpose of a holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance.

Parents are required to complete a leave of absence request form which must outline the exceptional circumstances for which the leave has been requested.

Leave of absence request forms must be completed in advance of the dates requested. We require 4 weeks' notice unless the absence is related to an emergency.

We do not give retrospective agreement for leave of absence so any absence not advised to the school in advance will be unauthorised.

Requests will be considered by the headteacher and parents and carers will be advised if their request is agreed.

Any pupil who has taken a term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence if they are ill in the period directly before or after the dates advised to school or if the absence is immediately before or after a designated school holiday period.

Parents/carers will be asked to provide evidence if a pupil does not return to school on the agreed date following a holiday as a result of delayed or cancelled flights or other travel arrangements.

### **Consequences of persistent and severe absence**

At Monkton Park Primary School we will always work with you to address any attendance concerns.

If we have been unable to resolve the issue, despite a number of interventions, then we may have to refer you to the local authority where possible actions include:

1) The National Framework for Penalty Notices

The Department for Education has issued a national framework and the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 which govern how and when penalty notices may be used.

All local authorities and schools must work within the new framework.

This means that whenever a pupil accrues 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period a school must consider whether a penalty notice should be issued. The unauthorised absence can relate to unexplained absence, absence that the school has not agreed to including for a holiday in term time or a pupil being late after the register closes.

Where a pupil has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 weeks that is NOT related to a holiday in term time we may issue you with a Notice to Improve. This will provide you with an opportunity to engage with support to improve your child's attendance. If support is not working then we will refer the matter to the local authority who may decide to issue a penalty notice to you.

Where there are 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period as a result of a holiday taken in term time the absence will be notified to the local authority who may issue a penalty notice without further warning.

Each parent can receive a penalty notice for each child that has unauthorised absence. For example 2 parents with 2 children who take a holiday in term time can expect to receive 4 penalty notices.

The new framework allows for parents to receive a maximum of 2 penalty notices for each of their children in a 3 year period.

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be **£80 if paid within 21 days**, or **£160 if paid within 28 days**. In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

If the national threshold is met on a third or subsequent occasion in 3 years then the local authority may present the matter to the magistrates' court.

or

2) The local authority may initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, imposition of orders such as Parenting Orders or even imprisonment.

or

3) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

### **Strategies for improving and maintaining good attendance**

We are a caring school community where the needs of all pupils are carefully considered.

Monkton Park Primary school provides and promotes a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that pupils feel safe, and know that their presence is valued.

If there are specific issues which might impact on your child's attendance it is important that you talk to us so that we can support you and your child. You can speak to the class teacher, member of SLT or our family link worker by emailing [admin@monktonpark.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@monktonpark.wilts.sch.uk).

There may be times when we ask other agencies to become involved to help us understand and work with you to encourage regular school attendance. (eg Wiltshire Council, school health, Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service, Medical Needs Education and Reintegration Service). If we feel that this would be helpful we will discuss with you first.

We are very keen to listen to the views of children and parents with regard to attendance matters and we welcome any feedback which helps us to shape how we work with families to address attendance issues and reward excellent attendance.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The attendance policy will be reviewed every two years by governors and school staff to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the school community.

We will ensure that the policy reflects current DfE and Local Authority guidance so that parents may be assured of the standards that we strive to achieve.

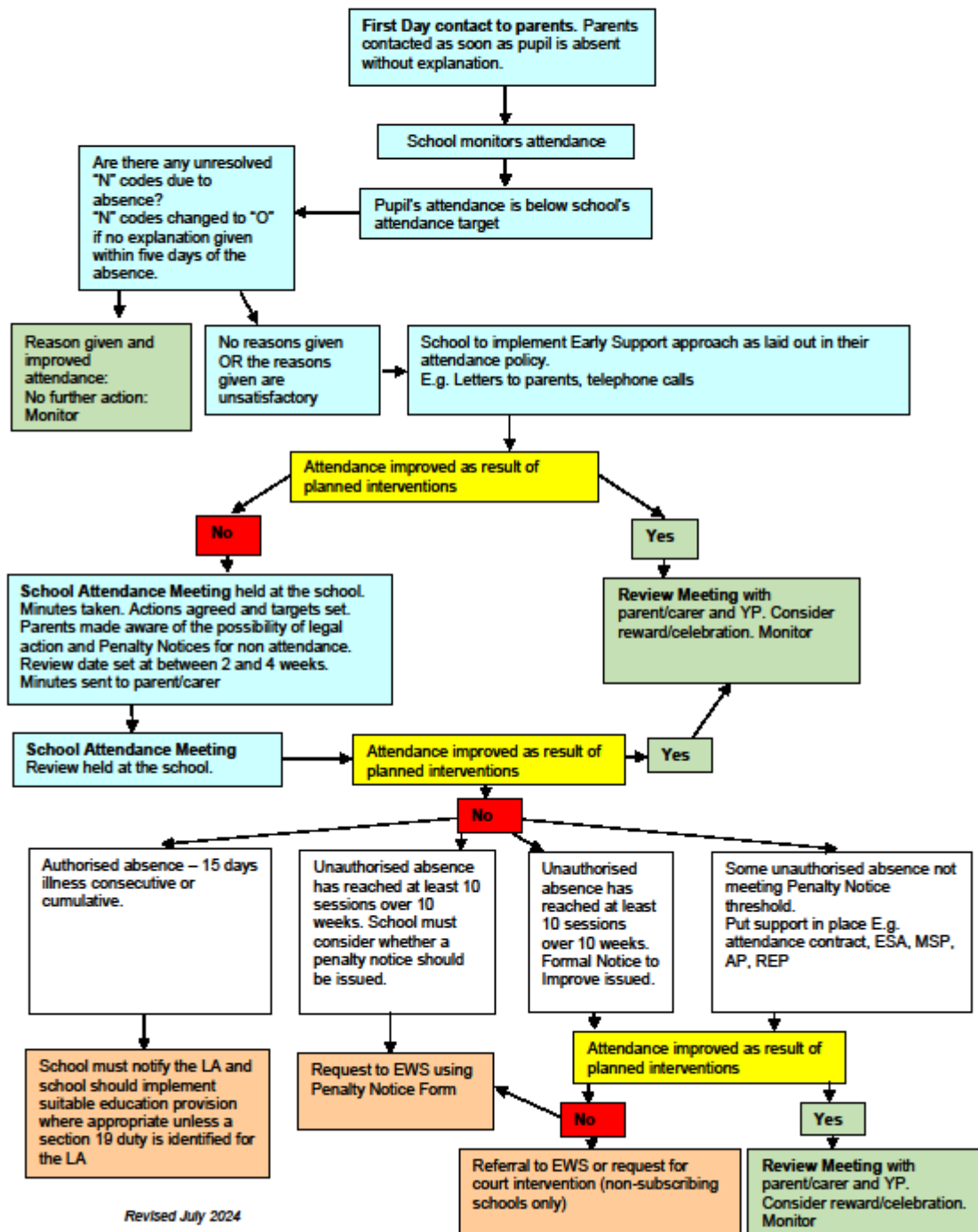
### **Communicating the contents of the Attendance Policy**

All new parents are introduced to the policy and information on attendance on the school website. School attendance will feature attendance in the school newsletter and we will advise parents of any changes to policy and procedures.



Appendix A

### Absence From School School Level Action



Appendix B

## **ATTENDANCE REGISTERS: NATIONAL ABSENCE AND ATTENDANCE CODES PRESENT**

**Code** / \ : Present in school / = am \ = pm

Pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they will still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be recorded as absent using code U, or another absence code that it is more appropriate

### **AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

The national absence codes must be used. Schools cannot add to the list of codes or use their own local codes. In order to be useful to schools in helping them identify patterns of absence, it is essential that there is consistency of use by staff within each school.

C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances (not holiday) (eg bereavement, maternity leave)
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
C2	Absence when a pupil is subject to a part-time timetable
E	Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc appointments)
J1	Interview (with a prospective employer or another educational establishment)
M	Medical / Dental appointments
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes

### **APPROVED EDUCATION ACTIVITY**

K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registration and not for a pupil participating in remote learning.)
D	Dual registration (ie pupil attending other establishment)
P	Approved sporting activity (arranged by school)

### **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other/unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed

## **UNABLE TO ATTEND DUE TO UNAVOIDABLE CAUSE**

- Q Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements (local authority duty)
- Y1 Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Y2 Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Y3 Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Y5 Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Y6 Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Y7 Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

## **ADMINISTRATIVE CODES**

- X Pupil not of compulsory school age not required to be in school
- Z Prospective pupil not on the admission register (to set up registers in advance of pupils joining school)
- # Planned or partial school closure ( eg school holidays, teacher training, school used as polling station, staggered starts for different year groups)

## APPENDIX C

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 places duties on all schools in England, including academies and independent schools.

These duties include providing the local authority (LA) with information about pupils both leaving and joining the school at non-standard transition points, i.e. in-year moves or when a pupil leaves before the end of that school's final year of education e.g. a pupil leaving at the end of Y8 so not going into Y9 at that school.

### GROUNDINGS FOR DELETING REGISTERED PUPILS FROM SCHOOL ADMISSION REGISTERS (Regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024)

- A The pupil has been registered at another school
  - B The pupil has not continued at the school following completion of nursery education
  - C The pupil is registered at one or more schools and the other schools at which the pupil is registered have agreed the deletion
  - D The pupil has a school attendance order which has been changed to name another school
  - E The pupil had a school attendance order which has been revoked
  - F The parent of a pupil has notified the school in writing that the pupil will be leaving the school to be educated otherwise than at school
  - G The pupil no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from the school
  - H The pupil has not returned following a leave of absence
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- I The pupil has been continually absent from school for 20 school days
  - J The pupil is detained under a sentence of detention
  - K The pupil has died
  - L The pupil will be over compulsory school age and will not continue into the sixth form
  - M The pupil is a boarder at a school maintained by a local authority or academy and their boarding fees have not been paid
  - N The pupil has ceased to be a pupil at an independent or non-maintained special school
  - O The pupil has been permanently excluded from the school

### Pupils not of compulsory school age (Regulation 9 (3))

The following are prescribed as the grounds on which the name of a pupil not of compulsory school age is to be deleted from the admission register:

- 3 (a) The pupil is a boarder and will not attend the school again
  - b) The pupil is a boarder and has ceased to be a pupil at the school
  - c) The pupil has been continually absent from school for 20 school days
  - d) The pupil has died
  - e) The pupil has been permanently excluded from the school.