Maypole School

STUDENT ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

September 2024

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Authorised by:	Adrienne Cherrywood	Date	05 Sept 2022
Publication Date:			05 Sept 2022
Reviewed:	Adrienne Cherrywood	Date	27 July 2023
Reviewed:	John Herring	Date	09 Aug 2024
Next Review due:			01 Aug 2025

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1. Introduction and Aims

Introduction

All children have the right to an efficient, full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability or any special need they may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them.

Maypole School takes its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils very seriously. Irregular attendance can disrupt continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement / low attainment, and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within the School.

Our policy is that the whole School community should take responsibility for attendance. Therefore, this policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of School attendance are aware and informed. We will work with a range of partners to ensure that we are doing everything we can to ensure that our pupils attend school full time.

Aims

The aims of this Policy are to:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality, and reduce absence and lateness (including persistent absence) in line with Ofsted and Government requirements.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Enable all parties to act early to address patterns of absence.
- Promote opportunities to celebrate and reward children for attendance and punctuality achievements.
- Support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and punctually.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2011](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](#)

- [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Authorised Absence: guidance for Parents / Carers

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either **UNAUTHORISED or AUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required.

Acceptable reasons for absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence; but there are occasions when absence is unavoidable. Acceptable reasons for which absence will be authorised include genuine sickness, hospital appointments, dentist appointments, recognised religious holidays that fall in term time (1 day / holiday only) and funerals.

Medical Appointments should be outside the school day

However please note that all medical appointments should be arranged <u>outside</u> of the School day, wherever possible; and parents / carers should actively try to arrange this. Where this is not possible, we would expect pupils to miss only part of the day, and to attend school for the remainder of the day.

Parents / Carers - please tell us in advance

If a parent knows of an absence in advance due to an appointment, the School office should be informed as early as possible, and the appointment card shown.

If a pupil is unexpectedly ill or has an unexpected medical appointment, then the parent or carer should ring the School as early as possible, to inform us; and on the child's return they should present a written note explaining the absence. If your child is absent and has been prescribed medicine by the doctor, please bring the medicine or prescription in to the School so we can photocopy it.

4. Unauthorised Absence: guidance for Parents / Carers

Unacceptable reasons for absence

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider to be reasonable, and for which no agreement has been given. Unacceptable reasons include:

- Parents & carers keeping their child off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day

- Parents / Carers taking a holiday due to being unwell
- Absences which have never properly been explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Activities such as shopping or going for a haircut
- Visiting relatives
- Birthdays
- Looking after other pupils
- Looking after other family members
- Day trips, and holidays in term time

Holidays during Term-time, and procedure in the event of extenuating family circumstances

If a Parent or Carer feels they need to remove their child from the School for any reason, they must complete a Term Time Absence Request form.

However, Parents / Carers need to be aware that absences / holidays during term time will <u>not</u> be authorised, unless in truly extreme or exceptional circumstances. In particular, it is illegal for Parents / Carers to arrange holidays to be taken during term time. We appreciate that flights can be much cheaper during term time – but this is <u>not</u> an acceptable reason for absence.

It should not therefore be assumed that Term Time Absence Requests will be agreed. The reality is that very few will ever be authorised. Parents / Carers should note that if an absence is not authorised, they may be liable to a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Pupil reluctance to attend

Whilst any pupil may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, parents / carers, and the pupil. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with the family to understand and address the cause of the problem.

5. Promoting Regular Attendance

95% attendance target

Many of the pupils at Maypole School will have a previous history of poor attendance or of school refusal. Nevertheless, we set a target of 95% attendance to ensure that our pupils come to school every day and make the best possible progress. We aim to promote a high level of awareness of the need for regular and prompt attendance.

Communication with parents / carers

We will ensure that parents & carers clearly understand the school's high expectations regarding attendance, during both the pupil admissions process and during the induction meetings for new pupils, and this will be reinforced during meetings with the school staff, such as at the regular parent / carer meetings and at Annual Reviews.
We will normally also speak to each parent / carer at the end of each school day, and by doing this we aim to establish close teamwork and liaison with all parents / carers. This enables us to prevent many potential attendance problems from ever occurring.

We will also report to parents & carers on their child's attendance and punctuality in the pupil's achievement reports, and through regular feedback in letters home, and on our website.

Rewarding and celebrating strong attendance

At Maypole we believe that the best reward for good attendance is in the learning the pupil achieves. However, we also want to recognise those pupils who make a true effort to sustain excellent attendance and punctuality.

Ways that we will recognise and celebrate excellent attendance include:

- The class with the best attendance for the previous week will be recognised and rewarded with a certificate.

- Children with 100% attendance are presented with a certificate at the end of each half term. Further prizes and awards may be presented for attendance.

- The class with the best attendance for the half term will be recognised and rewarded, in an appropriate way, on the last day of term.

6. Actions on unexpected absence

Parents and carers are required to contact the School office either by phone or in person, if their child needs to be absent from the School; and they must tell us the reason. This should be done as early in the day as is practical. The reason for absence will then be recorded on the Register.

If we are unable to obtain the reason for a pupil being absent, then:

- We will firstly call, text and email the parent / carer to find out the reason.

- If we do not get a response then we will attempt to contact the two emergency contacts that we have for the pupil.

- If we have been unable to contact the family or the nominated emergency contacts, then a home visit will be carried out. This will be done no later than Day 2 of absence. If this visit fails to establish contact then we will continue to try to contact both the family and emergency contacts, and to make further home visits where appropriate. On Day 3 a letter will be sent to the parent or carers, requesting an explanation of the absence. If no reply is received; the absence will be counted as unauthorised.

- If the school has not been able to ascertain where a pupil is after following the steps above, then the pupil will be classed as Missing from Education and this will be reported to both the Police, and to the SEN team in the Local Authority. This will be done no later than 5 days after the pupil was first absent.

7. What happens if attendance is poor?

Monitoring attendance and identifying a problem

The Headteacher reviews the attendance of all pupils regularly.

When a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, this will be addressed verbally and / or through an initial letter to parents or carers (this decision will be made on a case by case basis), highlighting

the cause for concern. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the fullest support and cooperation from parents & carers to deal with this.

Actions if no improvement is seen

If no improvement is seen then the Headteacher will request an appointment with the parent or carer, and the situation will be reviewed at the next month's check.

If there is still no improvement the Headteacher will meet again with the parent or carer, and where appropriate will ask for medical certificates to be provided so that each subsequent absence can be individually authorised.

If the child's attendance still does not improve, then an Interim or Emergency Review may be called, so that the problem can be discussed in the presence of a LA (SEN team) representative. Subject to the policy of the relevant LA, the matter may also be raised with the relevant Educational Welfare Department, through the completion of a CAF (Common Assessment Framework) form. In this event the parent or carer may be liable for fast-track court prosecution, prosecution and / or a fixed penalty notice under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Weekly attendance updates to LAs' SEN Teams

In addition to the liaison with LAs in the event of poor attendance (referred to above), we want to keep all SEN Teams informed of all their pupils' attendance, at all times. To do this, we will email the updated attendance record to each SEN team, on a weekly basis, for all the pupils that they have at the School.

8. Lateness and Punctuality

Timings of the school Day

The School day starts at 0850 for secondary pupils; and at 0900 for primary pupils.

Actions in event of lateness

Children who arrive after 0915 will be marked as 'L' (Late) and the time of arrival will be recorded. The registers will formally close at 1030. Any child who arrives after this time will be marked as 'U' (unauthorised absence) for that morning's session, unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as an emergency incident that caused a traffic delay for example. The parents of any child registered with 5 U codes in any half term will be subject to the attendance procedures outlined below and could potentially be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

The procedure for persistent lateness is the same as for absence – i.e. at 10% lateness the Headteacher will write to parents of the children to notify them that their child's punctuality is unsatisfactory. If there is no improvement over the following month then the following actions may be taken:

- The Headteacher may request an appointment to meet with the parent/carer and punctuality targets will be set.
- If there are unacceptable improvements after a month, a referral to the relevant LA may be made.
- 'Cause for Concern' records for absence and punctuality are kept.

9. Covid 19 absences

This policy will be adapted as required, in the event of further direction from either the Department for Education, or from relevant Local Authorities.

10. Attendance Register / Codes

Staff teams' duty: accurate and prompt updating of the Register

A register of attendance and the reasons for absence is kept for all students, in accordance with the law. The Headteacher manages this Register and reviews it regularly, to decide necessary actions.

The Register is an important legal document, and our teaching staff must enter their pupils' data accurately and promptly, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.

Children entering the School after the designated time are late, and should be marked as such, even if the Register has not been updated.

Attendance Codes

We use the following Government published codes in our register:

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late (after 0915) before register closed (at 1030)
B	Educated Offsite	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Authorised Absence codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on a holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical / dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their GCSEs
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Unauthorised Absence Codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when reason emerges - usually by the end of the day)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Administrative codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, or there is disruption to travel, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to, for example, half-term/bank holiday / INSET day