

Mytham Primary School



Pupil Attendance Policy

Consultation has taken place	Staff Date	February/March 2017	Governors Date	February/March 2017
Dates Formally Approved by Governors	Monday 19 th March 2018			
Date Policy became effective	Monday 19 th March 2018			
Review Date	March 2019			
Person(s) Responsible for Implementation & Monitoring	Angela Bogle (Headteacher)			
Other Relevant Policies	Safeguarding Policy			

Mytham Primary

Policy on Attendance

1 Introduction

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places a legal duty on parents to ensure their children of compulsory school age receive efficient full time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

The opportunity for your child to have access to a good education in a Bolton school is very important to us all. Encouraging good attendance gives each pupil the best chance to learn and achieve to their full potential.

The vast majority of our pupils achieve very good attendance, and the number of unauthorised absences (without permission agreed by the school) is lower in Bolton and Mytham specifically, than compared to the national average. Therefore, good attendance is not a problem in most cases.

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained.

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We reward those children whose attendance is excellent (98%) or above, by entering their names into a termly raffle. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Governor Board are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Safeguarding and attendance.

Attending school every day reduces the chances of children and young people becoming vulnerable to harm. School has a responsibility to ensure a pupil is attending school. If they are not we have a duty to find out why not and where the child is. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility. As a school we safeguard children and promote the welfare and future life opportunities for them by:

- * expecting regular attendance to school
- * having a clear behaviour for learning policy
- * ensuring health and safety within the school
- * allowing them access to a broad and balanced curriculum

- * having a clear anti – bullying policy
- * having a robust safeguarding policy

2. Definitions

School is legally required to record each student's attendance twice daily during term time. The school term dates each year are posted on the website. We ask parents to only look at the calendar on the website not from any other sources as they may have incorrect information.

Any absence from school will be recorded as Unauthorised or Authorised. Once a parent or carer has informed school of the reason for absence it is the schools responsibility (not the parent) to classify the absence.

2.1 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 guardian. For example, if a child is unwell, 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. There are 5 reasons for the school to authorise an absence:
 1. Illness of the child
 2. Family bereavement
 3. Medical appointments/reasons
 4. Educated off site
 5. Religious observance

2.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

An unauthorised absence is where the school is not satisfied with the reason for absences such as

- * Unauthorised holiday
- * Truancy
- * Looking after family members
- * Accompanying family members to a medical appointment
- * Illness that would not stop them attending school
- * Taking a full day for a medical appointment
- * No contact to explain the reason for absence within 2 weeks

3 If a child is absent or late

3.0 It is the responsibility of the parent, carer or guardian to contact the school at the start of each day of absence. They should provide a reason for the absence.

3.1 Lateness can cause children to miss key learning that happens immediately as children enter to start their day and so it is vital that your child is at school on time every day. If your child is going to be late for any reason please contact the school office before

8.45am to explain reasons for this. All lateness, before and after the close of registers, will be logged and you will be asked to meet with the Head Teacher and further action taken should this become a regular occurrence.

- 3.2 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. The school office will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian if they have not contacted the school to supply a reason.
- 3.3 If the child returns to school and school has not yet had an explanation for the absence, the parent will be asked to explain the child's absence in writing. We use a standard letter for this purpose.
- 3.4 A note should be sent to the school prior to the day of a planned absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment so that this can be logged correctly in the electronic register.
- 3.5 School are willing to support parents in helping children return to school if they are well but need to continue with medication or if they have had an injury /operation e.g. a broken leg but are otherwise well. In certain circumstances we can make reasonable adaptations so that their needs can be catered for. Parents are asked to contact school to discuss how we can best support their child. This will ensure that the impact on the child's learning is reduced to a minimum.
- 3.6 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

4 Requests for leave of absence

- 4.1 In September 2013 the Government made amendments to the school attendance regulations by removing reference to family holidays and extended leave during term time. The amendments made clear that the Headteacher may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 4.2 The Governors recognise that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time.
- 4.3 When an application is made for authorised absence during term time, the Headteacher gives consideration to:
 - * The nature of the proposed absence.
 - * The timing of the proposed absence.
 - * The attendance pattern in the present and previous academic years. Absence will not be authorised where attendance is lower than 96% or where the absence would take attendance below 96%.
- 4.4 Following government guidelines there is **no automatic entitlement in law to have time off school for holidays**. The Headteacher and Governors will only give authorisation to a holiday in exceptional circumstances. An exceptional leave form must be completed and the request will be considered by the Headteacher and occasionally Governors if it is a complex reason.

Any leave of absence taken **without** the Headteachers approval may result in the local authority issuing a penalty notice fine.

- 4.5 Mytham follows Bolton Local Authorities criteria when making the decision to issue penalty notices as a result of holidays being taken which are unauthorised.

5 Long-term absence

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will consider sending work home dependent upon how well the child is.
- 5.2 If the absence is a planned one e.g. following an operation we would be happy to work with parents to ensure that their child is supported upon their return to school. In certain circumstances we can make reasonable adaptations so that their needs can be catered for.
- 5.3 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services such as the Early Intervention Team (previously known as 'Educational Welfare Officer') and/ or Hospital Teaching for advice regarding how to support a child.
- 5.4 Occasionally school may be able to offer a part time timetable in order to ease a child back into school particularly after an extended absence for ill health.
- 5.5 It is important that parents and school work together in these cases so that the child does not develop anxiety around returning to school. If necessary we have the support of a school counsellor to assist.

6 Repeated unauthorised absences/Persistent Absenteeism

- 6.1 The school will contact the parent or guardian of a child who has an unauthorised absence to ask for an explanation as to their absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.

- 6.2 If attendance drops below the school target of 96% parents will receive a letter indicating that this is the case and requesting that attendance should improve.

If attendance drops below 92% then parents will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the reason for this and any necessary action will be agreed.

If attendance drops below 90% then this will be classed as persistent absence. Parents will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and regular monthly meetings will continue until attendance improves. Bolton guidance will be followed when attendance drops below this figure which means that no illness will be recorded on the register unless a GP appointment card or other suitable evidence can be provided to support the absence. If attendance has not improved by the first monthly meeting then an Early Help Assessment will be discussed with parents. This will be initiated at the second monthly meeting if attendance has not improved and a referral to the Early Intervention Team (previously known as Educational Welfare Officer) will be made.

- 6.3 Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

- 6.4 In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may

affect their child's attendance. They are reminded of this duty in the home school agreement

- 6.5 Prior to the engagement of external agencies, the school may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupils' absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for external agency involvement.
- 6.6 If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Early Intervention Team (Educational Welfare Officer), who will contact parents and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation
- 6.7 The Education Welfare Officer, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. If there is no improvement, parents may be issued with an Education Penalty Notice
- 6.8 Persistent Absenteeism is when a pupil's attendance falls to 92% or below irrespective of the reason for absence.
- 6.9 Mytham Primary School follows Bolton LA guidelines for 'Education Penalty Notices' for unauthorised absences.

7 Rewards for excellent attendance/punctuality

- 7.1 The names of all the children who have 98% (excellent) per cent attendance in any term will be entered into a raffle draw. There are special certificates for any child who has 98% per cent attendance for a whole year. We also have a draw for children who have 100% punctuality each month. Their names are announced in our school newsletter.

8 Attendance targets; The current target for whole school attendance is 96%

- 8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The Governor Board also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records electronically on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 9.3 The rates of attendance will be reported through relevant Governor's sub-committees and at the full Governor Board meeting each term.
- 9.4 The Headteacher will be responsible for monitoring attendance and attendance patterns. He/she reports attendance / punctuality data to Governors termly.
- 9.5 This policy will be reviewed by the Governor Board every year, or earlier if considered necessary