



**MORDIFORD C of E
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Treasure each individual

Attendance Policy

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Last updated: 26th June 2024

Agreed by Governors: 1st July 2024



Introduction

At Mordiford we pride ourselves on providing a vibrant, **inspiring** and **nurturing** environment that supports the holistic development of all our children and where children are happy and love coming to school. Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and help them **flourish**.

Objectives;

- Create an ethos within the school in which good attendance is recognised as the norm and every child aims for excellent attendance.
- Ensure attendance and punctuality are a priority.
- Set focused targets to improve individual attendance and whole school attendance levels.
- Record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism.
- Ensure a systematic approach to gathering and analysing relevant attendance data.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and children and develop mutual cooperation between home and the school in encouraging good attendance and in addressing identified attendance issues.
- Demonstrate, using appropriate rewards, that the school recognises good attendance and punctuality are achievements in themselves.

This policy draws on the following legislation:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education Regulations 2013

This attendance policy should be read in conjunction with and is consistent with our:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEND policy

At the heart of our strategy is high, shared attitudes;

Parental responsibilities;

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time, with the correct uniform and equipment.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.



Child responsibilities;

- Children should aim to have excellent attendance and to arrive at school on time and ready to learn.
- Children who are late should be accompanied by parents and signed in at the school office.
- Children should not leave the school without permission. This would automatically be seen as a Safeguarding concern.

Class teacher responsibilities;

- Provide a good example by always being punctual to registration and meeting children from the playground.
- Providing a welcoming environment.
- Keep an accurate and up-to-date register of attendance.
- follow the Attendance Policy procedures when dealing with absences and punctuality.
- Swift action and effective communication with senior leaders on all attendance matters concerning their class.
- Ensure that children and young people are aware of the importance of the school attendance target and their own individual attendance targets - where appropriate assist them in monitoring their own attendance rates. Children and classes will be rewarded for excellent attendance.
- Absences are followed up by class teacher in the first instance discussing barriers and reinforcing importance of good attendance.
- Providing support as necessary when children return after an absence.

Admin Staff responsibilities;

- Take calls and record answerphone messages about absence on a day to day basis and record it on the Scholarpak.
- Monitor daily attendance and call parents to request reason for absences if reasons have not been provided.
- Pass on identified patterns or concerns to attendance lead and SLT.

Attendance Lead and SLT responsibilities;

- Ensure that rewards and sanctions for attendance and punctuality follow agreed procedures.
- Monitor the attendance of vulnerable groups and individual classes, following up on irregular patterns of absence that are not being effectively addressed.
- Work together on ensuring that appropriate action is taken in the management of absenteeism and poor punctuality
- Have Safeguarding and Welfare, incorporating individual attendance concerns, as a standing item during all staff meetings.
- Ensure contact is made with parents of poor attendees – always placing support before sanction. Where out of school barriers are identified, we will signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance. If the issue persists, we are committed to taking an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Where there is a lack of engagement, we will hold formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Formal letters sent to parents if individual pupil's attendance drops below 90%. We adopt a joined-up approach with respect to attendance and pastoral support and where required,



put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plans, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.

- Where there are safeguarding concerns, SLT target support and work collaboratively with external agencies. We provide ongoing support for persistently absent pupils and agree a joint approach with the local authority.

Attendance at Mordiford CE Primary School

To support good attendance, and safeguarding, at Mordiford we:

- Provide a welcoming environment in which every child feels a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- Ensure the regular, efficient, and accurate recording of attendance is complete by every class teacher each day. This supports our approach to safeguarding within the school. We take safeguarding extremely seriously and we contact parents on the day that a child is absent from school.
- Children who arrive after the close of registration will be recorded late.
- Consider any requests for leave in term time individually. This will be aligned to the Local Authority code of conduct.
- Notify the Local Authority within 5 days if a new child is joining the school roll.
- Inform the Local Authority of children whose parents have notified the school in writing and have opted for Elective Home Education.
- Work closely with the School Attendance Support Team.
- Notify the Local Authority of Children Missing in Education – aligned to the DfE 2022 Attendance paper.

At Mordiford we believe that securing good attendance cannot be achieved in isolation, and effective practices for improvement involve a unified, whole school approach.

Our Strategic Approach at Mordiford CE Primary School

We have adopted the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework (explained below), which is evidence informed and child-centred.

5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice

The 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice model promotes, and supports, a whole school approach to mental health and emotional well-being; ensuring social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) support remains a key driver in improving attendance for all children.

Foundation 1 – Whole School Thinking, Culture and Climate;

The school has a fully embedded ethos in which excellent school attendance is expected, developed and nurtured. The escalated approach to supporting attendance is built on foundations of belonging and connectedness.



Foundation 2 - Supportive Policies, Systems and Processes;

The approach to improving attendance is built on clear policies, systems and processes. This ensures continuous and sustainable improvement drives attendance practice. The attendance policy is understood by all stakeholders and allows the school to set, and maintain, high expectations to improve the culture of attendance.

Foundation 3 – Professional Learning and Staff Development;

The school prioritises developing a clear and shared vision. External partnerships support attendance improvements through a multi-disciplinary approach for identified children and families.

Foundation 4 – Implemented Targeted Programmes and Intervention;

Data information and analysis direct resources proactively towards key demographic groups and identified individuals. The expert use of data analysis informs decision making at all levels. The attendance process ensures the Attendance Leader understands the reason for attendance concerns, these barriers can then be successfully supported and removed.

Foundation 5 – Connect Appropriately with Approaches to behaviour management;

Connecting and belonging drives the school approach to supporting attendance. All staff are supported to understand 'deeper roots' regarding poor attendance concerns. The school has developed, and embedded, an effective rewards system to further drive attendance improvements and celebrate success.

Home – School Partnerships

We will always work in partnership with our parents. Parents should inform the school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school to identify any additional early help that may be required. Safeguarding is a priority, concerns for any child at any time will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Attendance Lead will initially:

- Check records, including any from other schools which the child has attended previously to identify potential patterns.
- Discuss with staff how the child is coping with the curriculum
- Review any Special Educational Needs that may have an impact
- Take into account the voice of the child and understand any difficulties, e.g. curriculum or bullying and their views on how the issue could be addressed.
- Children whose attendance falls below 90% are Persistently Absent from school, where a child falls under 50% attendance the child will be classified as a Severely Absent child.
- Persistently Absent from school equates to missing 19 days in total, across the academic year (see Appendix 2). At this point parents will be written to and parents will be asked into school to discuss the attendance of their child. Where attendance remains a concern and all other interventions and support have not made a significant impact, we will escalate with external partners.



Punctuality

The School gates open for children at 8.30am (or 7.45am for children attending Breakfast Club). The class register will close at 9:00 am. Children arriving after the close of registration will be recorded as late. Late marks will not be authorised and will count as an absence for the school AM session.

Punctuality is recorded and this will be added to a child's record of attendance and a letter will be sent to parents every half term regarding attendance concerns of a child. The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

Requests for Term Time Leave

From 1st September 2013, the Government amended the England (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Head teachers may only grant leave in 'exceptional circumstances'.

Parents wishing to apply for leave during term time must send a written request for the attention of the Headteacher and a Holiday request form will be issued for completion. Parents will be reminded of the impact of taking holidays during school time. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each leave during term time request will be considered on an individual basis. If the permission to take leave is not granted and the child is still absent from school, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may consider legal action. Only in exceptional circumstances will absence be agreed. In such cases, consideration will be given to the cultural needs and the family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin. In these cases, granting leave for longer periods than normal may be considered justified. In all cases though, parents will be required to justify why the leave needs to be taken during term time.

How we use attendance data?

Children's attendance will be monitored and shared with other agencies and the DfE. Attendance figures of all pupils are monitored daily by the admin staff and those of individuals, vulnerable groups, classes and the whole school are monitored weekly by the Attendance Lead.

Meetings will focus on agreed actions for those children of concern. The purpose of each meeting will be to understand the progress the school is making when supporting identified individuals or groups of children. Attendance data will be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

Attendance figures are presented to the Governing body regularly. It is the responsibility of school Governors to challenge and support the school regarding overall attendance.

Persistent Absence

Children whose attendance falls below 90% are classified as persistently absent. When children fall below this figure we write to parents (see Appendix 1) and hold attendance meetings with them. We will identify barriers to good attendance and work in partnership to raise attendance. If this is unsuccessful, this may trigger additional intervention and support by external agencies.



Legal Sanctions

There are several sanctions that school can take to address the issue of non-attendance. To try and identify the reason for absence we will always talk to parents to ascertain the reason for absence. The focus will always be on supporting the child needs at each stage. However, for lack of engagement in attendance support there are sanctions that will be considered.

Penalty Notices will be considered when

- A child is absent from school for the purpose of a Leave of Absence in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A child has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further absence has occurred following written warning to improve
- Holiday during term-time when the school has not authorised the absence and the child has missed at least 10 sessions within a 13 week period Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Herefordshire Council.

Please see guidance;

[Appendix E- Code of Practice for issuing fixed penalty notices v1.4 \(herefordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/education/penalty-notices)

Where intervention through the school's process fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the local authority will be notified and legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under section 444/4441 (a) of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring their child's attendance at school. Section 4441(a) of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

Celebrating Success at Mordiford

We notify parents of our whole school attendance percentage in our newsletter, as well as providing a weekly breakdown by class. The class with the best attendance are celebrated in Achievement Assembly.

Pupils with 100% attendance at the end of each term are celebrated and awarded certificates. We are committed to the future of all children that attend Mordiford CE Primary School, and by working in partnership with the school community we believe that together we can achieve more! We encourage parents to discuss with us any issues that may give rise to pupil absences.



Appendix 1

The School House
Mordiford HR1 4LW
t: 01432 870258 e: admin@mordiford.hereford.sch.uk
w: mordifordprimaryschool.co.uk

Dear ,

At intervals through the year I take the opportunity to study patterns of attendance at school. Our records show that your child's attendance has dropped below 90% since the start of the academic year.

.....'s attendance is currently % .

Attending school is essential for students to make good progress, achieve their academic potential and consequently have better chances in life. We always aim to encourage full attendance and punctuality. If your child is ill you must phone the school office as early as possible to let us know what is wrong. We have a legal duty to maintain an accurate record of attendance and absence. Staff are expected to know where they are if they are not present.

Below are examples of how attendance is impacted upon by school absence.





While we understand that some school absence is unavoidable, other absences should be avoided. The following examples are intended to help you to maximise your child's attendance and learning:

- Ensure dental/doctor appointments are made outside of school hours where possible. If this is not possible, your child should attend school before/after their appointment as appropriate.
- Avoid taking your child on holidays during term time. As you are aware, Head teachers are not able to authorise an absence unless it fits under our exceptional circumstances policy.

We hope you will work with us to improve your child's attendance for the remainder of the academic year where possible.

Yours sincerely

