



Attendance Policy
November 2022

Monkston Primary School

Attendance policy

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by completing the following:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

- 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 \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

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3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for the following:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for the following:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for the following:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Jo Michel (deputy head teacher) and can be contacted via 01908 671034 or office@monkston.org

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for the following:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

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- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Joanne Carr and can be contacted via 01908 671034 or office@monkston.org

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will do the following:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the relevant assistant head in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to do the following:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to do the following:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment

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- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken by 8.40am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

- The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).
- Parent/carers are expected to contact the school absence line (01908 671034) or email office@monkston.org by 9:00am on the morning of the first day of absence.
- Where the school has not been contacted regarding an absence, the school will attempt to contact the parent/carer by phone, text or email. If there is no response and the school are concerned about the welfare of a child or family and have been unable to contact anyone from the contact list held, then the school may contact the police and request a welfare check for the family.
- We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school of the appointment.

- Parent/carers are expected to notify the school for any appointments by either calling (01908 671034) or email office@monkston.org prior to the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

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The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (8.40am – 9.10am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed (after 9.10am) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will do the following:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by attempting to contact the parent/carer by phone, text or email. If there is no response and the school are concerned about the welfare of a child or family and have been unable to contact anyone from the contact list held, then the school may contact the police and request a welfare check for the family.
- Where a student is known to have attendance problems, the school will make contact on each day of absence.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be communicated with parents. At the end of the autumn and spring term, a copy of their attendance record will be sent home. In the summer term, a copy of their attendance record will be sent home along with their school report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

Exceptional circumstances **does not include** holidays during term time because they are cheaper, or to celebrate a special birthday of a family member.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

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To request a term-time absence, parents are required to complete the Application for Leave of Absence form [Appendix 2]. Parents can request a copy of this from the school office. Once completed, it must either be handed to the school office or emailed to office@monkston.org

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school feels passionately about supporting families to ensure that all pupils are able to attend school to achieve their full potential. Therefore we have a range of strategies which we may implement to support improved attendance:

- Discussions with parents and pupils
- Referrals for support
- Additional learning support
- Incentives for pupils to come into school
- Further support from nurture assistant/ trusted adults

7. Attendance monitoring

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will collect and store attendance data for the following purposes:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and every three weeks at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence every 3 weeks and reports this information to the senior leadership team.

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For any child whose attendance falls below 95%, assistant heads will, in the first instance, contact families to offer support and to sign post to other services which may be appropriate. For example, the school nursing team.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will complete the following:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will complete the following:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 30% or more of school.

If a child falls into this category, the school will apply the following:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide a structured intervention plan written in agreement with senior leaders and parents/carers
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum once per year by Jo Michel – Deputy Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

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Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

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 before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	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 trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
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 holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

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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 public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
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 the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
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

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, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, 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 half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

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Appendix 2: Application for leave of Absence

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Application for Leave of Absence – Exceptional Circumstances

The staff and governors are confident that parents share our wish that all children make the most of their skills, talents and opportunities. Regular attendance at school is vital if we are to achieve this aim. Without regular attendance, the learning process is disrupted and unsatisfactory, consequently children do not achieve their full potential. Parents are strongly urged to avoid taking their children out of school during term time as this significantly affects educational progress.

Amendments to the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2008** make it clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Child's Name: _____ Class: _____

Child's Name: _____ Class: _____

Child's Name: _____ Class: _____

I have noted the above and request that my child(ren) be granted leave of absence due to the **exceptional circumstances** detailed below:

Dates:

From _____ To _____ (inclusive dates)

Application for leave of absence authorised

Application for leave of absence unauthorised Reason why absence has not been agreed:

Due to government regulations, I am unable to authorise any term time holiday.

Other:

Non-attendance history for the year:

Signed _____ Headteacher Date: _____