



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Policy statement on equality and diversity

The Mosslands School will promote equality of opportunity for students and staff from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds and ensure freedom from discrimination on the basis of disability, gender, race, age, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

Equality and diversity are integral to the School's priorities and objectives. We will support inter-faith and inter-cultural understanding and engage all students in playing a full and active role in wider engagement with society.

Approved by:

Last reviewed on:

Next review due by:

AIM:

To raise levels of achievement and engagement by ensuring the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.

OBJECTIVES:

- To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance.
- To promote a partnership with parents to communicate concerns or issues with attendance and punctuality and to offer appropriate support and intervention.
- To identify causes of non-attendance and take appropriate action.
- To improve attendance of individuals, groups and therefore the School.
- To use staged intervention to tackle persistent absentees; to employ a multi-agency approach to tackle issues.
- To reward good attendance for individual students and groups.

THE LAW:

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full -time education.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Since March 2001 there has been further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend school regularly, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

The Supreme Court ruled in April 2017 (Platt v Isle of Wight) that **regular** attendance is '**in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school**'. In Wirral Schools, this is interpreted as **every day that the school requires a child to attend, unless the absence has been approved by the Headteacher. The Mosslands School attendance target is 97%**

1. Introduction

The Mosslands School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent attendance for all. We strive to provide a caring, supportive community where pupils can flourish, making the most of the gifts and talents that they have been given.

The school vision underpins all we do, all we promote for our community. This is based on the belief that for our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from this education, it is vital that they attend regularly and on time. Pupils who are comfortable and supported within the community attend regularly and make good academic progress. High attainment depends on good attendance.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's education and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Children who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and make academic and social progress. There is a strong link between the number of days' absence a student has and the qualifications that students achieve. Student absence can disrupt teaching routines and may affect the learning of others in the same class.

The whole school community – pupils, parents/carers/carers, teaching staff, support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. Only by our all supporting each other, having a strong home-school partnership can we ensure that pupils have the best opportunity to maximise their potential. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this. This policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations.

2. Parents/Carers Responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child) who will be supported by The Mosslands School.

The Mosslands School expects parents/carers/carers will:

- Ensure their children attend regularly
- Support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum
- Not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence and not condone unjustified absence from school. Provide medical evidence to support any absences as appropriate
- Notify the school on the first day of absence by calling 0151 638 8131 and respond to truancy call as soon as possible if it is sent.
- Ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the correct books and equipment for the day
- Work in partnership with the school and attend any meetings required to support attendance
- Contact school without delay if they are concerned about any aspect of their child's attendance. School will work to support parents/carers to address their concerns.
- Ensure pupils catch up work missed during absence

3. School's Roles and Responsibilities

All staff at The Mosslands School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting regular attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the community and look forward to coming to school every day knowing that they are going to be served in a nurturing, compassionate community which promotes our core values of Care, Commitment and Challenge. These will prepare students for future roles in society.

Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

The following staff have specific roles and responsibilities:

a) Form Tutors

- Set an example by arriving on time
- Investigate reasons for lateness and any missed lessons
- Promote regular habits of attendance within their form group, encouraging pupils to strive for excellent attendance (97%+)
- Be aware of and alert others if patterns of absence of individual students become apparent
- Welcome long- term absentees back into form
- Complete SIMS register every morning accurately and on time, ensuring that late students are recorded appropriately.
- Discuss attendance figures with their Form using the Bi-Weekly Attendance Tracker and ensure that students are aware of their own attendance.
- Support and nurture pupils, encouraging pupils to attend punctuality and regularly
- Celebrate pupils' attendance including improvements made.

b) Subject Teachers

- Set an example by arriving on time
- Complete lesson by lesson registration on SIMS every lesson and record students who are late
- Ensure paper registers are used in the event of ICT failure and make sure that the attendance office is aware.
- Analyse data for patterns and trends of individual students and groups for discussion with Curriculum Leaders

c) Curriculum Leaders

- Ensure attendance is on agendas for curriculum meetings and curriculum reviews
- Ensure patterns of poor attendance are followed up with relevant parties
- Put into place systems and intervention to ensure absent pupils catch up on missed work

d) Attendance office

- Monitor input of data into SIMS
- Listen to phone messages to the attendance line and read e-mails and code students on SIMS as appropriate
- Utilise IRIS as appropriate when dealing with attendance. Truancy call to be sent as close to 9.30am as possible.
- Actively use Inventry to monitor late attendance
- Complete Bi-Weekly Attendance Tracker and send to Form tutors for discussion with forms
- Produce letters to follow up unexplained absences
- Organise and lead Internal Attendance panels, maintaining each database producing weekly registers for meetings, ensuring the correct letters are sent home to invite/inform parents/carers of attendance and maintain notes of meetings held. Meetings to be held twice weekly
- Organise the preparation of data for half termly analysis of trends and patterns of attendance and punctuality for each year group and whole school. This data should include absence according to FSM, SEN, EAL etc with comparisons to previous year and include suspension details
- To implement legal procedures arising as a result of poor attendance and maintain records. This includes the production of court papers as requested by the LEA
- To refer children who are, or who are at risk of becoming, Children Missing from Education (CME) to the Local Authority in accordance with Wirral Policy.
- To notify the Local Authority of any child whose name is deleted from roll at parental request in order to pursue elective home education.
- To visit pupils at home to support engagement
- Prepare attendance report for Headteacher, Governors and lead SLT
- Maintain attendance board

e) House Offices

- Promote and celebrate good attendance within the year group
- Monitor and supervise the work of Form Tutors in promoting attendance
- Monitor lesson attendance and deal with post registration truancy
- Communicate with parents/carers of pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties
- Liaise when appropriate with Attendance team when appropriate
- Regularly discuss attendance at all assemblies throughout the year
- Attend Attendance Panel meetings to agree appropriate action for pupils with ongoing attendance issues when necessary

f) SENDCO

- Monitor the attendance of all pupils under their care
- Liaise with house offices, student services and the attendance office regarding strategies for specific students

g) Assistant Head Teacher – Attendance Lead

- Ensure that the attendance policy is implemented and that systems are operating effectively
- Create a school ethos which promotes excellent levels of attendance
- Communicate with pastoral teams regularly regarding attendance issues
- Report to SLT and Governors on attendance matters
- To prepare and analyse data as required by the PPL/APPL or AHT – Attendance
- Promote excellent attendance through a system of rewards.

h) Governors

- Ensure that statutory attendance statistic is submitted
- Review and approve the Attendance Policy
- Annually review attendance data
- To support Internal Attendance Panels

i) Pupils' Responsibilities

To attend school every day, half day and lesson on time ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their Form Tutor a note from their parent/carer to explain the absence.

- Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.
- To complete work missed due to absence.
- To inform school if they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school.

4. Registration

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence.

Every school, by law, has to register pupils twice a day; first thing in the morning at the start of the school day, and again in the afternoon session. Form Tutors are therefore legally responsible for completing the attendance registers using the Present, L or N code. All other codes will be entered by the attendance team as appropriate

The register will be taken promptly at 8.45 am and 3.10 pm by each Form Tutor and a mark entered on SIMS in respect of each child.

Registers will close at 9.55 am . Any pupil who arrives AFTER the register closes will be counted as ABSENT ie, with the use of the U code. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as PRESENT with an L code but will be dealt with under the school's lateness procedures.

If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised. Only the school can approve the reason for absence.

i) Authorised Absence

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- a) Where leave of absence has been granted by the school in advance – for example:
 - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority
 - a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the pupil's pattern of attendance will be considered.
- b) Where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend. Medical evidence will be required in order for this to happen.
- c) Where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents/carers/carers) should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send them in beforehand. Evidence of appointment is required.
- d) Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions.
- e) The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong.
- f) In other exceptional circumstances (e.g. family bereavement) and for a very limited time.

g) Guidance produced for all schools, makes it clear that no holidays may be authorised in term time unless under exceptional circumstances. These exceptional circumstances have been defined by DfE as follows:

- Where a child is terminally ill
- Serving members of the Armed Forces where conditions of employment preclude parents from taking holidays during school holidays.
- Where employment is subject to set work holiday times. In such cases a letter from the place of employment on headed paper must be provided as evidence.

ii) Unauthorised Absence

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- No explanation has been given by the parent
- The school is not satisfied by the explanation or no evidence has been provided to support the absence
- The pupil is staying at home to mind the house/relatives
- The pupil is shopping during school hours
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday
- The pupil is absent on holiday without prior permission
- The pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable to give a satisfactory reason for the absence

5. Class Registers

In order to track pupils' whereabouts throughout the day and deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of pupils, subject teachers will take a register at the beginning of every lesson to record absence and lateness. Any sudden absences that occur during the day should be picked up immediately by the Behaviour support worker who will inform the relevant House office. Measures will be taken to locate the pupil. Parents/carers will be advised by the relevant House office accordingly if the pupil cannot be located.

6. Staff Training

The School Office Manager will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

7. Lateness and Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school and to be in the correct room for registration on time every day. It is disruptive to their own education and that of the others in their class if they are late.

Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session unless school is satisfied there is a legitimate reason for the lateness. Such reasons will not include things such as missing the bus, lost shoes or dirty clothes being washed.

A pupil who is late is placed on a 15 minutes detention with the form tutor that night

A pupil who is late ten times after 9.55 am will receive an Educational Penalty Notice. Key Stage 4 pupils who are persistently late will find this reflected in their school references.

For health and safety reasons it is important that school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore always sign in at reception via Inventory. For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately ensure that they sign out at reception via Inventory. This is only authorised by prior arrangement.

8. Children at Risk of Missing Education

a) Pupils at Risk of Harm/Neglect

Should there be a suspicion that a child is suffering from abuse or neglect, this will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead. The school will then follow child protection procedures and make an appropriate referral to the Local Authority. If there is a suspicion that the child is involved in a crime or the child's safety is at risk, the police will be contacted.

In the event of a student being absent from school for 3 weeks without contact being made (through telephone, letter, email or home visit) student services will contact Social Care.