



Millhouse Primary School

Attendance Policy



Introduction

At Millhouse Primary School we want to ensure that our pupils are able to take the fullest possible advantages of all that we have to offer. Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to fulfil their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored with the school seeking to work actively with parents and other agencies to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We aim to strive towards every child reaching our 97% attendance target to ensure that each child can get the best out of the educational opportunities provided. Working in partnership with parents and other agencies, we do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate and robust procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Research shows there is evidence of a strong link between good attendance and increased attainment. Pupils who regularly attend school make much better progress both socially and academically. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%). Regular attendance enables pupils to adapt better to routines, school work and friendship groups. As a consequence those pupils will have a positive experience of learning and have a more successful transition from primary to secondary and beyond to further education and training.

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra familial harms, including crime (the proportion of children that had been cautioned or sentenced for any offence that had ever been persistently absent was 81% and for serious violence offence was 85%).

Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Only the school can 'authorise' absence. The school will not assess all reasons as 'valid'.

Responsibilities

In order to manage and promote regular school attendance, parents/carers should:

- Understand their legal responsibilities by ensuring regular school attendance with regard to the Section 444(1) and 444 (1A) Education Act 1996 and Section 36 of the Children Act 1989.
- Understand their responsibility to keep the School/Academy up to date with at least 2 emergency contact details as required by the Children Missing Education requirements and in line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.
- Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time, appropriately dressed and equipped and in a fit state to learn.



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- Impress to their children the importance of regular school attendance by keeping absences to a minimum and ensuring that children are only out of school when they are too sick to attend.
- Establish effective communication with school and swiftly address any worries their children may have about coming to school, so that we can work together to resolve this.
- Let the school know, by telephoning the school office before 9.30am, on the first day of absence from school, why their child is absent and when they are expected to return, keeping school informed if the absence is likely to continue so that school and partner agencies can ensure that amendments or alternatives can be made to provision if required.
- Provide school with any medical appointment cards, and where ever possible make appointments out of school hours; where this is not possible parents will ensure that children attend prior to or following their appointment.
- Seek permission from school prior to any absence that is not medical.
- Not take their child on holiday during term-time.
- Not extend weekend breaks into the school week.
- Attend any meetings called by school and partner agencies to discuss attendance and engage with support offered.
- Where pupils are at risk of becoming persistently absent: Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.
- Where pupils are persistently absent/ severely absent: Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.
- Notify school if they intend to remove their child permanently from the school for any reason.

In order to manage and promote regular school attendance, school will:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Make suitable arrangements for the safe, daily reception of children.
- Be consistent in their attendance practices.
- Keep and mark registers accurately.
- Follow up any unexplained absences via phone calls/ letters home.
- Monitor individual students' attendance in order to:
 - a) Celebrate good and improved school attendance and reward this through competitions, certificates and events
 - b) Notify parents when we are worried about their child's attendance – this may be via a text, phone call or letter home.
- Keep parents updated on the School's overall attendance and individual pupil's attendance, via text messages, letters home, newsletters, social media, the website. Individual pupil attendance is communicated to parents half-termly via text message.



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- Inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school or a child is due to become missing from education.
- Follow Public Health guidance should any local lockdowns or outbreaks in school occur.
- Report to parents how their child is achieving in school and how their child's attendance is impacting on this, via regular parent evenings.
- Build positive relationships between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. The link between attendance, attainment and wider wellbeing will be discussed with parents.
- Notify the Local Authority (LA) of pupils who have poor attendance, leave school to be educated at home, go missing, or are excluded.
- Notify the LA and/or the Department for Children, Families and Schools (DCFS) of absence figures for the school and, where necessary, individual pupils.
- Utilise attendance data, analysing patterns and trends to target attendance and punctuality improvement across pupil cohorts or individual pupils, to reduce persistent or severe absence from school.
- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance. Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance (e.g medical needs/ special educational needs and disabilities). Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance (e.g Early Help or other wider partners). If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners.
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support or reasonable adjustments.
- Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners. Where there is a lack of engagement, school will hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Review the attendance policy annually and publish on the School website.

The Head teacher – J.Mills (from 1st September 2026) is the designated senior leader with responsibility for attendance.

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure that everybody at school treats attendance as a priority.
- Promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers.
- Keep parents updated on attendance and the School calendar, via text messages, letters home, newsletters and the website.
- Be available to discuss attendance concerns with pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Remind parents at least annually of attendance procedures.



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- Analyse attendance data.
- Oversee attendance procedures.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes.
- Benchmark school attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels or performance of similar schools to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Report to the Governors on attendance at least three times per year.

Mr. Mills can be contacted via email – j.mills@millhouseprimary.co.uk and is available to discuss any issues/ support with attendance matters.

In order to manage and promote regular school attendance Governors will:

- With the Head teacher, monitor, evaluate and review the attendance procedures regularly.
- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school culture.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.
- Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.

In order to support school and academies in managing and promoting regular school attendance the Education Welfare Service will:

Identify a key strategic lead to work collaboratively with School/ Academy, to:

- Support in fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to improving attendance.
- Attend meetings with the School/Academy to identify children with irregular school attendance and develop strategies to ensure that all children can attend school regularly.
- Support the school in promoting attendance by providing advice, guidance and creation of action plans in relation to working together to improve attendance.
- Review referrals from school to address matters of poor school attendance when Early help and intervention has failed to improve attendance by:
 - a) Visiting parents' homes to undertake an assessment of need and to challenge and resolve matters of poor school attendance.
 - b) Involve other agencies where appropriate, such as Public Health (school nurses) or Early Help.

In situations where all other strategies have failed to improve school attendance, the Education Welfare Service will enforce Section 444(1) and 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 and the Children Act 1989, which may result in a fine up to £2,500; a Parenting Order; a community order; or a custodial sentence. Consideration will also be given to the issuing of a Penalty Notice in case of unauthorised absence where appropriate (see code of conduct – Appendix 1) and/or a Parenting Contract or Education Supervision Order.



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School Times

We open classroom doors at 8:45am to allow pupils to enter school calmly in time for the start of morning registration at 9.00am.

School finishes at 3.30pm. Children should be collected promptly unless they are attending an after school activity. In the unlikely event that a child is not collected at the end of the school day and we cannot contact parents/carers or emergency contacts, social services will be contacted.

Registration

School must keep attendance registers for all pupils on the school roll. The class teacher will call the register twice a day (9:00am and 1:00pm) and every pupil will be marked as present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site. It must be shown, by the use of approved codes, whether an absence is authorised or not.

Lateness

Children and parents know they are expected to bring children to school on time. This is detailed on the school website and parents are reminded in newsletters as needed. Pupils arriving after 9.00am and before 9.30am will be marked late. Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be marked with an unauthorised absence mark unless there is an acceptable reason for lateness when they will be marked with an authorised absence mark. Parents bringing their children to school late will need to visit the school office so that they can be signed in and will be asked to provide the reason for the lateness. The number of minutes late is recorded in order to measure the impact of lost education due to late arrival. In the case of regular late arrivals, letters are sent to the parents or a phone call may be made to the home. The Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will be involved as appropriate for persistent lateness.

Absences

Children are noted as absent from school via the computerised register system.

Parents are expected to inform school (via telephone – 01226 763019/ email – schooloffice@millhouseprimary.co.uk) of the reason for absences, however, it is school who make the decision whether to authorise or unauthorise the absence. School will make this decision based on the information available to them. Parents are encouraged to provide as much information as possible and information such as appointment cards, medication or application for leave of absence will assist school in making this decision. Precise reasons for absences due to illness need to be given in order for the school to authorise.

Re-occurring unauthorised absence will be referred to the Education Welfare Service and this can lead to legal interventions and a formal assessment. If attendance is not improving, School may consider an Attendance Contract, which is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school or local authority to address irregular attendance. An attendance contract is not a punitive tool, it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution.

Following this, School can also request a Notice to Improve letter from the Local Authority. The liable parents/carers will receive a Notice to Improve which is a formal



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warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 6 school weeks to affect an improvement. If the child's attendance does not improve in line with the expectations set out in the notice to improve at any time within the monitoring period, then a penalty notice may be issued in line with the national framework for penalty notices.

Support through statutory children's social care involvement will be pursued where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).

Request for leave of absence in term time

Millhouse Primary School has adopted the DfE National Framework for attendance and the Barnsley Code of Conduct when requesting Penalty Notices to be issued from the Local Authority. Further information on the National Framework can be found in Working Together To Improve School Attendance July 2026.

All parents who wish to take their child out of school for any reason (other than medical reasons) should complete a leave of absence request form. As head teachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

If parents proceed with the leave of absence in term time, School may refer to the Local Authority for a fixed penalty notice. Penalty notices may be issued due to the deliberate taking of leave of absence in term time without or against school permission, (where it can be demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not or would not be given), and where this has created a period of unauthorized absence in the current term of at least 10 sessions.

It must be noticed that in line with the National Framework, the Local Authority retains the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, when parents/carers are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold.

Penalty Notices

As detailed in the national framework for penalty notices in Working Together to Improve Attendance, a penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. Only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate. For example,

- First offence - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child payable within 21 days. This fine increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, but before day 28.
- Second Offence (within 3 years) - the second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days.
- Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child and may make an order for legal costs. (see Appendix 2)



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Absence for participation in a performance

In these instances Millhouse Primary School will follow Local Authority's guidance and by-laws, working in partnership with Education Welfare Service to ensure that any performance absence is within the parameters of the law.

Rewards

In order to promote attendance in a positive way to the children in school, the school attendance mascot – SAM (School Attendance Matters) – is awarded to the class with the highest attendance. The class is then rewarded with 5 minutes extra playtime. Children who have full attendance each term are given a termly attendance certificate and their achievement celebrated in Special Mention Assembly.

For children who achieve full attendance for a whole school year, a certificate is awarded and a prize is presented in the last assembly of the year.

Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. The following policies all link into our Safeguarding policy to ensure that we are working together to safeguard children:-

Attendance

Behaviour

Anti-Bullying

Health and Safety

The School has also adopted the Local Authority Policies on Children Missing Education, Elective Home Education. The School also follows Local Authority guidance in relation to coding absence for families who travel as part of their culture.

All these policies have been endorsed by our governing body, which supports the School in all attempts to improve the attendance and safeguarding agenda.

Development and implementation of this policy will be considered under School obligations from the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Additional information can be found at www.barnsley.gov.uk/education-welfare-service

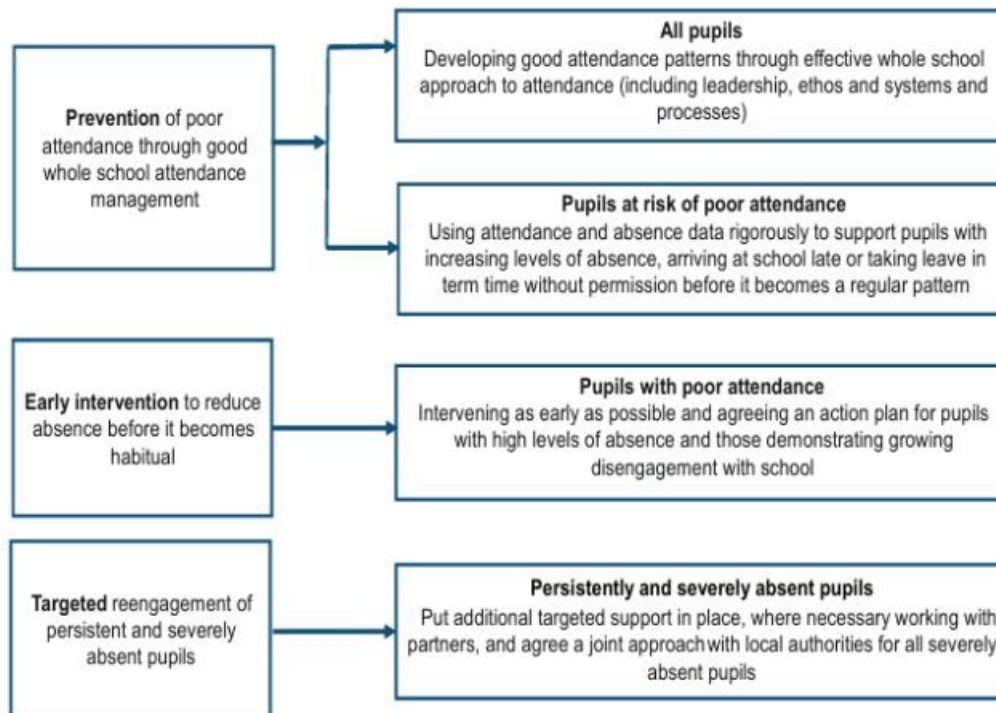


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Appendix 1

Effective school attendance improvement and management



This flowchart shows a graduated approach to improving attendance. It starts with a whole school focus for all pupils, building strong attendance culture and systems. Schools should then use data to identify pupils at risk early and provide support before absence becomes established.

Where absence increases, schools should intervene quickly and agree an action plan with the pupil and their family. For pupils who are persistently or severely absent, more intensive and targeted support should be put in place, including, where needed, working with partners and the local authority.



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Penalty Notices for School Absence

The National Framework came into effect on the 19th August 2024.

Penalty Notices can be issued for:

Leave of Absence - Penalty Notices can be requested by schools for leave of absence in term time for 5 or more days. This can be consecutive absence, or non- consecutive. The LA retains discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met. For example, when parents/carers are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking multiple term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events, or a combination of non-attendance due to leave of absence and unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence - Penalty Notices can be requested by schools when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. In these circumstances a Notice to Improve may be sent to the parent by the Local Authority on behalf of the school prior to the notice being issued.

First Offence – The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

Second Offence (within three years) – The second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

Third Offence and any further offences (within 3 years) – if a third offence or any further offences are committed, a penalty notice will not be issued and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444(1) or s.444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child and may make an order for legal costs, a community order, or a jail sentence of up to three months.



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