

MAPLE PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date: September 2016

Next review: September 2020

INTRODUCTION

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 will also make the best provision we can for those children who, due to ill health, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006*, the Governing Body 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 the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Pupil absence impacts on children's progress in learning and settled participation in school life.

ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION

All children should be in the playground ready to come into school at 8.50 a.m. each day although children are entitled to enter the playground from 8.40 a.m. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 sessions of morning and afternoon.

Morning registration ends at 8.55 a.m. If a child arrives after the registration period, he / she will be marked in as **Late**. After 9.20 a.m. this will become an **Unauthorised Absence**, unless there is an acceptable reason for the lateness. The afternoon register is taken at 1.15 p.m.

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent / guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the office. The signing in / out register in the office is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.

ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

The school office should be informed by 9 a.m. in the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence.

DEFINITIONS

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 has been unwell and the parent writes a note / emails or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school decides if an absence is authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence

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

IF A CHILD IS ABSENT

Parents are expected to email or telephone the school by 9.00a.m. on the morning of the day of absence to inform the school that their child will be absent. They are asked to state a reason.

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. The school office will endeavour to contact the parent or guardian by 9.30 a.m. if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence.

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.

THE EDUCATION (PUPIL REGISTRATION) REGULATIONS 2013

Section 8(1) "Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school".

Amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that from September 2013 headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances. It is for the headteacher to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT MAY CONSTITUTE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- To have a short absence to attend a close family wedding, or a special family celebration (e.g. an 80th birthday of a grandparent); or to attend a special family reunion; or to attend a special religious/cultural festival, may constitute an exceptional circumstance. If a child has to miss school for a special family circumstance, then ideally the time when they will miss the least academic work is during the last week of a term.
- To have a week's winter or summer holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

CRITERIA BY WHICH THE HEADTEACHER WILL MAKE DECISIONS CONCERNING THE AUTHORISATION OF HOLIDAY ABSENCE

- a) The general attendance of pupils will be considered. If a child has had a significant number of absences for any reason they will not be able to "afford" to miss any further schooling. A holiday request for exceptional circumstances is unlikely to be approved unless the child's attendance is 97% or above for the past year.
- b) The timing of the proposed holiday - one of the worst times for a child to be absent is at the beginning of a new school year, particularly with a new teacher or a new class; and for Year 6 pupils, in the build up to and during the National Curriculum tests.

Teachers will not be required to set work for completion when a child is absent on holiday.

LONG TERM ABSENCE

When children have an illness which leads to them being absent from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or become a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition to support reintegration, but a medical letter will be needed specifying the significant absence period.

REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Unauthorised absences remain on the child's record and may be reported to the Local Authority's Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO).

Attendance and punctuality are monitored by the AIO and the school. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences and/or late arrivals, the parents and guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. The AIO may write to parents, or attend a meeting at school, and may visit home, to raise concerns about absence and parent's responsibilities regarding school attendance.

The LA has the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians of children of compulsory school age who repeatedly fail to meet their responsibility of ensuring their child's regular full time school attendance.

REWARDS FOR GOOD ATTENDANCE

All the children who have close to or achieve 100% attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded in assembly. There are special certificates for any child who has 100% for a whole year which will be awarded in the final assembly of the Summer Term. A reward will be given each term to the class with the highest number of 100% attendees (e.g. additional playtime).

ATTENDANCE TARGETS

The school is set a challenging attendance target each year. These targets are agreed by the senior staff, the Chair of Governors and the LA School Improvement Partner at the annual target-setting meeting. The Headteacher will report on attendance percentages in the termly report to the Governing Body.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The Governing Body 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 the school's attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, where there is a pattern of continued absence, this will be reported to the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every four years, or earlier if considered necessary.