



Millfield Primary

Attendance Procedures 2024

Millfield Primary continues to focus our attention on attendance. We are keen to ensure that we promote the highest attendance possible for all our young people as this is a fundamental life skill that will ensure young people's future success. Not only is it vital that our young people establish the very best habits and routines to ensure their success as future employees but there is also very clear national data that clearly shows the impact that poor attendance has on young people achieving the best possible outcomes and educational achievements. In short, if young people are not at school, we cannot teach them and this will affect their academic achievement at all levels.

As a result of this we take a very firm and consistent view when parents seek permission for an absence from school for their child due to circumstances other than genuine illness. All parents can expect that all requests from parents seeking permission for leave of absence for their child will be refused and therefore unauthorised. As you will be aware permission may be sought where there are exceptional circumstances such as attending the funeral of a close family relative.

- Parents/Carers should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reasons such as sickness, they should contact the school by 9:15am, on the first morning of absence. This may be done by phone, by letter, email or in person.
- If a child is absent the office staff will enter the appropriate code in the register. If no explanation has been received by 9:15am from the child's parents/carers the school will endeavour to make contact with the parent, including calling all emergency numbers. However this will be recorded as 'unauthorised' but the reason given by the parent will be noted. Home visits may also be conducted.
- Parents/Carers should ensure that their child arrives at school in time for the start of registration (8.45am). If a child is late they should report directly to the school office, with their parent signing them in. If the parent is unaware of the lateness then they should be contacted by an appropriate member of staff. **Lateness is monitored and may be recorded as unauthorised.**
- We take a very firm and consistent view when parents seek permission for an absence from school for their child due to circumstances other than genuine illness. All parents can expect that all requests from parents seeking permission for leave of absence for their child will be refused and therefore unauthorised. Permission may be sought where there are exceptional circumstances such as attending the funeral of a close family relative.
- Registers will be called twice daily at 8.45am and 1pm. Registers will close at 8.50am and at 1.05pm. Any child arriving after the closing of the register will be recorded as 'late' for that session. Any child arriving after 9am will be recorded as 'unauthorised late' for that session.
- The Headteacher will regularly collect attendance data and will use this data during meetings with the school's EWO. These meetings will agree on attendance thresholds and targets and will identify respective tasks and follow-up actions for both the school and the EWO.
- The school employs a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:
 - the Headteacher and class teachers will communicate regularly with Parents/Carers on attendance matters;
 - appropriate personal encouragement or congratulation will be offered to individual children and classes;

- clear attendance information will be entered in the school brochure;
- weekly class attendance certificates;
- LEA Parents/Carers leaflets will be sent to all new Parents/Carers.

Definitions

Authorised Absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate, acceptable reason and the school has received an appropriate notification from the parent/carer. For example, should a child be unwell and the parent/carer writes a note of explanation and/or telephones the school to explain the reason for absence.
- Only the Headteacher may authorise any absence. Parents do not have the authority to do so. Consequently, not all absence supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised Absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and the parent/carer, or if the child is away from school without good reason even with the support of a parent/carer (eg shopping or birthday).
- If a parent fails to contact school by 9:15am on the morning of a child's absence, necessitating the school contacting the parent on safeguarding grounds, then this too will be recorded as 'unauthorised'.
- Holidays taken within the school term (except in exceptional circumstances agreed by the Headteacher) will be deemed as unauthorised absence. The expectation of the Local authority is that term time holidays should not be planned or booked as they are likely to lead to the issuing of a penalty notice.

As parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a referral to the Local Authority for enforcement actions to be considered. The Local Authority could issue a Penalty Notice fine or initiate legal proceedings through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child. This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

The fine for a penalty notice is £80 per child, per parent/carer, increasing to £160 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child(ren). This could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent. If a second penalty notice is issued for the same child within a three-year rolling period, the fine is automatically £160. For a third penalty notice within a three-year rolling period, the parent will automatically be listed for prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996. Where a parent takes a child out of school during term time for an extended period (20 days or more), not authorised by the school, prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may also be considered.

- Exceptional circumstances will be considered on an individual basis but the following will not meet the criteria:
 - Cheaper holidays in England or abroad
 - Visiting family/friends who have different half term holiday dates
 - Family weddings for more than 2 days or visits to see family
 - On a holiday rota set by an employer
 - Relatives coming to visit