

## **Attendance Policy 2022-23**

### **Aims of the policy**

To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning.

### **Objectives of the policy**

- To meet the government attendance targets set for us.
- To create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.
- To ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days.

### **Academy Responsibilities**

- To clearly communicate the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- If home visits are undertaken and there is no answer at the home address, a letter will be posted through the door stating that school has tried to visit. Additional services will be contacted if the child is deemed to be vulnerable.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To promote and reward good attendance.
- Where there are concerns around attendance, staff will log this onto CPOMs and alert the member of staff responsible for attendance.
- The office will e-mail the Safeguarding Team and the HoA listing absent children before 9:30am

### **Parental Responsibilities**

- To have children in class ready for teaching at 8:40am
- To inform the front office on every day of any absence **before 9:30am** via phone call, email, text, on the app or in-person at the office.
- To work with the school to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.
- If parents, guardians, or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should: talk to their child and teacher; it may be something simple that could need your help in resolving.
- To avoid holidays being taken in term time.

## The Fine and Prosecution Process

The school Attendance Officer will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss with the Head of Academy. Where issues persist, the following will be initiated:

**Stage 1:** Verbal communication with parents outlining concerns and followed by a letter confirming attendance percentage with a timeline to improve

**Stage 2a:** After 20 unauthorised absences (O and U codes), a fixed penalty notice will be issued to the local authority to be sent to parents/carers for 15-day notice of improvement.

**Stage 2b:** If no improvement during the 15-day period, the fixed penalty will be issued.

**Stage 3:** After the fixed penalty notice, if no improvement made, parents invited into a meeting in school to set targets which last for four weeks.

**Stage 3:** If targets are not met, a further plan is in place for a further four weeks.

**Stage 4:** Formal prosecution proceedings will occur if the targets are not met from Stage 3 after the four weeks.

## Absence During Term Time (e.g. holidays)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

*Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.*

It is the policy of Mersey Primary Academy not to authorise any absence other than proven illness or exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised absences may result in prosecution proceedings including a Fixed Penalty Notice.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate notice would be issued to each separate child.

If a child has a planned absence, parents/carers must complete the planned absence form (Appendix A). The Head will consider whether the absence falls under exceptional circumstances or not before authorising the absence.

If no planned absence form is completed, the absence will automatically be unauthorised.

**As of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, the rate per child is £60 if paid within 21 days and rising to £120 per child is paid between 22 and 28 days.**

If the penalty notice is not paid, parents may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each parent may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £2,500 plus costs.

There are 190 school days (380 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are 13 weeks of school holidays per year. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period of school holidays.

## Sickness Absence During Term Time

- The academy school office **must** be notified of your child's absence **before 9:30am** each day. It is a parent's responsibility to notify the academy.
- If you let the academy know of the absence via text or email, then we will call you to clarify the illness further.
- If the academy is not informed of absence before 9:30am, we will call parents. At this point all absences will be marked as unauthorised.
- We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.
- If your child has the same illness more than once in a term, we will request a doctor's/consultant's letter. The absence will be listed as unauthorised until this letter is produced.
- Any child with absence below 90% will have their absence marked as unauthorised unless a doctor/medical note is produced as proof of absence.
- For minor illnesses that require medication, we are able to administer medication for you at school. There is a small form to fill out. This is important so learning is not missed unnecessarily.

## Promoting Good Attendance

We celebrate good attendance throughout our School by:

- Weekly assembly to promote attendance and punctuality
- Class prizes weekly for the class with the highest attendance the previous week
- Termly attendance prizes for children achieving 100% attendance for the term
- Class rewards for every time the class receives 100% attendance
- Attendance and punctuality to be an essential part of Leading Learner awards (see behaviour policy).
- Awards for children who achieve 100% attendance for the full academic year
- Focused attendance weeks

## The Role of the Education Welfare Service

**The Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.**

Section 444 of the Education Act states, "If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence."

The Education Welfare Service, may issue a Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecute parents when children do not attend school regularly.

**The academy will always pursue enforcement when a child has reached the triggers for penalty fines and/or prosecution.**

## Appendix A – Planned Absence from School Form

<p><b>PLANNED ABSENCE OF PUPIL FROM SCHOOL</b></p> <p>The Government asks parents to make sure that they take their holidays during the school holidays. As you are aware only the school can authorise any absence from school. We realise that there will be rare occasions when parents may need to ask for authorisation of a planned absence from the academy, in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p><b>The academy will not authorise any holiday unless there are exceptional circumstances.</b></p> <p><i>In the event of a planned absence this request form should be completed by the parent/carer and forwarded to the Head of the pupil's school for consideration before the period of absence.</i></p> <p>I ..... am making a request on behalf of my child(ren).....</p> <p>for an authorised absence from ..... to ..... in order to ..... ..... ..... .....</p> <p>My child/ren will return to school on ..... I would like the school to take the following information into consideration when making the decision ..... ..... .....</p> <p>Signed.....(Parent/Carer)</p>	<p>Dear Parents/Carers,</p> <p>Thank you for your request for a planned absence.</p> <p>Under Government guidelines, at this time I am unable to authorise your child's planned absence because..... ..... ..... ..... .....</p> <p>On this occasion the school will authorise.....day/s:- ..... ..... ..... .....</p> <p>If your child does not attend school the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer will be notified, which may result in a fine.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Head of Academy</p>
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