



### Attendance Policy

<b>This policy replaces</b>	Previous attendance policy
<b>Date policy approved by Governing Body</b>	January 2017
<b>Date of next review</b>	Alongside Safeguarding Policy
<b>Reviewer</b>	Safeguarding Governors and SLT

## **Agreed alongside the other Primary Schools in Market Harborough**

### **PRINCIPLES**

Market Harborough CE Academy expects good attendance from its pupils in order that they can take full advantage of the learning experiences provided for them and aims to support pupils in developing positive attitudes towards punctuality and attendance. Parents and staff should make pupils aware that their presence in school is important.

Overwhelming evidence shows that children who attend school regularly are more likely to:

- make better progress academically and socially.
- find school routines and school work easier to cope with.
- maintain closer friendships with other children.

Our aim is to:

- Achieve attendance levels of 95% and above across the school.
- Reduce persistent absence.
- Significantly reduce requests for holiday during term time.
- Improve punctuality.
- Maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance and punctuality between home and school.

Positive measures in place to encourage 100% attendance:

- All children with 100% attendance to receive a special treat at the end of term.
- The top achieving class each week, will be presented with the Attendance Trophy [filled with treats].
- All children with 100% attendance for the year will receive a certificate.

### **THE LAW**

**The Education Act 1996 states “If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence”**

Based on the above Act we expect parents to ensure their children attend school regularly. Failure to ensure regular attendance can lead to parents being either issued with a Penalty Notice or Prosecuted through the Magistrates Court.

- A Penalty Notice stands at £60 rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days
- A Prosecution can result in a fine of up to £2,500 and or 3 months imprisonment.

### **ATTENDANCE**

As part of our strategy to improve attendance we write to parents if we become concerned about their child’s attendance and punctuality. We have a letter system in place as follows:

### Letter 1 – Concern

We will write to parents whose child's attendance fall below 95%. Our letter will always invite the parent to contact the school or to arrange to come into school to discuss the situation with a view to resolving the matter. We inform parents in our letters or at school meetings that we may request evidence to enable us to authorise their child's absence.

### Letter 2 – Frequent medical absence

We will send this letter to parents should letter 1 not bring about an improvement in a child's attendance or if a child is identified as having a lot of time off school due to illness. Parent's will be invited to contact the school to discuss the matter further or alternatively advised to speak directly with the Education Welfare Officer, (EWO).

### Letter 3 – Referral to the EWO

If the school's efforts to improve attendance are unsuccessful, we will send letter 3, referring the matter to our Education Welfare Officer who will contact the parent to address the issues which may be preventing their child from attending school regularly; this is with a view to offering support and solutions to bring about change.

**NB:** We ask parents to take note that in accordance with the Education Act 1996, the Education Welfare Officer will initiate legal proceedings against parents, via the Local Authority should their child's attendance not improve.

## **REGISTRATION**

Registers are a legal document and provide a daily record of the attendance of all pupils on roll at the school. The class teacher is responsible for marking the register at the start of morning and afternoon sessions.

Children are expected to arrive at school by 8.55am. The register is taken at 9.00am and returned to the office at 9.10am. Children who arrive in school after 9.00am must go directly to the school office where their time of arrival and reason for lateness is recorded in the Late Book. They are then marked as late (L) in the register. Arrivals after 9.30am will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless the reason given is accepted by the school.

The register is taken within 10 minutes of the afternoon session beginning.

## **ABSENCE**

When a child is absent from school, the absence is recorded by the school as either authorised or unauthorised; parents cannot authorise their children's absence.

### **Authorised absence** (where the school approves pupil absence)

Absence may be authorised for occurrences such as:

- pupil sickness; evidence may be required
- serious or critical illness of a close relative;
- unavoidable medical/dental appointments; evidence may be required
- exceptional short term domestic circumstances;
- religious observance;

- bereavement;
- wedding of immediate family member; limited number of days
- attendance at or in connection with a Child's Hearing or Care Review;
- approved activities for sports and the arts; evidence may be required
- travelling (where ascribed to the Traveller Community).

**Unauthorised absence** (where the school will not approve absence)

Absence will not be authorised for events such as:

- shopping trips;
- birthday or other day trips;
- non-medical appointments;
- closure of a sibling's school for training days;
- family holidays.

**OUR APPROACH TO ADDRESSING ABSENCE**

We expect our pupils to attend school regularly and on time.

**FIRST DAY CALLING**

If a child is absent from school, parents are expected to call the school on the first day of absence by 9.30am stating a reason.

As a school we take our safeguarding duties very seriously. If parents have not contacted the school, we will initiate our "First Day Calling" procedure and phone/text parents at home or work to ascertain the reason for their child's absence [before 10.00am]. It is therefore vital that parents continually update the school on any changes to their contact details.

**If the school is unsuccessful at contacting a parent and still remains concerned about the child's absence, further action may be taken by the school on that day.**

If contact is unsuccessful by the morning of the second day of absence, the matter will be brought to the attention of our EWO who will endeavour to contact the parents or conduct a home visit. If contact or the home visit remains unsuccessful the EWO may enlist the help of the police and request a "Safe and Well" check to be conducted on the grounds of safeguarding.

**ILLNESS**

We expect parents to contact the school on the first morning of their child's illness, giving an explanation and expected date of return. There is no necessity to ring the school every day unless the absence lasts 3 days or more, however keeping your child off school for minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable.

In the case of a child with a high level of absences for medical reasons, we may request parents to provide evidence such as a stamped appointment card/compliment slip, prescription or prescribed medicine to support their child's absence, this is so the school can code the absence correctly.

Repeated absence from school will be discussed and referred to our EWO who may invite you to attend a meeting in school to address the matter.

### **MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

Parents are asked where possible, to avoid making medical appointments for their children during the school day. Appointment letters and stamped appointment cards will be required for the school to code a child's absence correctly.

### **PUNCTUALITY**

It is important to foster positive attitudes to arriving at school on time and therefore expect parents to ensure their children arrive at school by 8.55am prepared for the school day. Children who arrive late not only miss vital information given at the beginning of lessons, their arrival disrupts and interferes with that of the teacher and other children in the classroom and can also make the child feel self-conscious.

Children who arrive after the school gates have closed must come into the building via reception, where the time and reason for arriving late must be entered in the late book.

Parents of children who appear to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists the matter will be referred to our EWO who may invite you to attend a meeting in school to address the issue.

### **END OF THE SCHOOL DAY**

Parents are responsible to make the proper arrangements to ensure their children are collected promptly from school at the end of the school day.

Parents are expected to notify the school if for any reason they will be late collecting their child at the end of the school day or from an after-school club.

Parents are expected to notify the school if a designated adult will be collecting their child.

If your child attends an after-school club then you are expected to collect your child as soon as the club is finished. We are not responsible for your child's supervision once school or after school clubs have finished.

Persistent late collection of children may result in the school informing Social Care on the grounds of safeguarding.

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE OR FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME**

Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday or requesting leave of absence during term time. A pupil's absence in term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days that they are away, but they are also less well prepared for the lessons building on this when they return.

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, the amendments to the Education Regulations in relation to absence from school give **NO** entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave will only be considered for authorisation by the Headteacher provided it meets the criteria of “**exceptional circumstances**”:

- where a family holiday is judged to be important to the wellbeing and cohesion of the family
- following a serious or terminal illness
- bereavement or traumatic event
- the holiday might be a unique, one-off never-to-be-repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested (e.g.: won as a prize or given by a charity)

The following reasons **are not** deemed as exceptional circumstances:

- The availability of cheap holidays or desired accommodation
- Holidays which overlap the beginning or end of term
- Holidays booked by a third party

A parent request must be made in advance, using the appropriate form. Your request will be considered by the Headteacher and may be discussed with the EWO, after which the school will write to you with a decision.

Parents of pupils in Year 6 are made aware of the fact that statutory testing takes place annually in May and cannot be taken at any other time and therefore the Headteacher is **unable** to grant Leave of Absence permission for Year 6 pupils during the week of the statutory tests.

Parents who disregard the schools decision to authorise a request for leave of absence place themselves at risk of being issued with a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

If issued with a penalty notice, each parent will be fined £60 which must be paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the fine(s) within this timescale, will result in the fines being doubled to £120 which will need to be paid within 28 days of the original fine being issued.

If the fine(s) remain unpaid after the full period of 28 days has expired, parents may face legal action under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty of an offence under this Act, parents will receive a criminal record and could be fined up to £1000 with the possible addition of court costs and victim surcharge.

**We strongly advise parents NOT to book holidays or leave of absence before making a request and further advise that you may be asked to provide supporting evidence in respect of your request.**

### **COMPASSIONATE LEAVE**

The death of a close family member can be a traumatic experience for a child and as such the school will deal sympathetically with a parent's request for their child to be absent from school to attend a funeral or associated event.

### **CHANGE OF SCHOOL**

If parents decide to move their child to another school, they must inform the current school as soon as possible.

The child will not be removed from the current school roll until the following information has been received:

- The date the child will be leaving the current school
- The date the child will be starting the new school
- The name and address of the new school
- The families new home address and phone number, if moving to a new house

### **RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE**

We will authorise absence on these grounds provided written confirmation is received from the religious body to which the parent belongs stating that the day or days are exclusively set apart for religious observance.

We would appreciate if parents could give advance notice of their religious observance days.

### **PUBLIC PERFORMANCES**

Children from birth to the end of Year 11, who take part in entertainment performances, both professional and amateur, require a "child performance licence" which are issued by the Local Authority where the child lives; this is Legislation. The license is designed to protect the child's health, education and welfare. The licence applies to children performing on licenced premises, if there is a charge for the performance, if the child performs for more than 4 days in a fixed period, for paid sport, photography or modelling and if the child is going to be absent from school.

Should a child be involved in a performance that will fall on a school day, their parent must request permission from the school in writing, with supporting documentation for the child to attend. Your request will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer after which you will be written with a decision or the relevant form signed.

We would appreciate it if parents could give advance notice of their child's performance days.

**Children who perform without a license may be breaking the law, this could mean a risk of prosecution for a production company.**

**For further information, contact the Child Performance and Employment Team:**

**Phone: 0116 305 7820**

**Fax: 0116 305 6330**

**Email: [childreninentertainment@leics.gov.uk](mailto:childreninentertainment@leics.gov.uk)**

## **Appendix A**

### **School Register - Attendance Codes**

#### **Present at school:**

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm  
Present in school during registration

L Late arrival before the register has closed

#### **Authorised:**

B Off-site educational activity  
C Leave of absence authorised by the school  
D Dual registered – at another educational establishment  
E Excluded  
H Holiday authorised by the school  
I Illness (not medical/dental appointments)  
J At an interview with prospective employers/or at another educational establishment  
M Medical or dental appointment  
P Participating in a supervised sporting activity  
R Religious observance  
S Study leave  
T Traveller absence  
V Educational visit or trip  
W Work experience

#### **Unauthorised:**

G Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher  
N No reason yet provided for absence  
O Absent from school without authorisation  
U Arrived in school after registration closed

#### **Administrative codes:**

X Not required to be in school  
Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances  
Z Pupil not on the admission register  
# Planned whole or partial school closure