



Middlewich Primary School

Attendance Policy



Introduction

At Middlewich Primary School, we believe that good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life. It is important to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in certain cases.

The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents/carers, and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage good attendance and will liaise with home and partner agencies if this is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

Consultation Process:

1. School Staff:

This policy is shared annually with school staff.

2. The Governing Body:

The final policy will be presented for approval to the whole Governing Body in the autumn term each year.

3. The Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers will be advised of our policy on attendance:

- When their children first start at our school
- Home school contracts
- Through newsletters
- At parents/carers evenings
- School website

4. The Children:

Children will be advised of our policy on attendance:

- In assemblies
- In the classroom
- Through the School Council

Procedure:

- Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence.

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
 - Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence)
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- It is expected that parents/carers will provide an explanation if the child is absent **on the first day** the absence occurs. This can be by telephone, personally at the office or by appointment.
 - If contact, explaining the child's absence, fails to be made by parents/carers then the school will contact the home by telephone or texting by 9:30 am. If the school has not been contacted by 10:00 am by parents/carers, the school will ring other family members/friends as listed on the child's contact information. If a lack of contact persists, a home visit may be made that day if deemed necessary by senior leaders. Alternatively, a home visit will be made on the second day of absence. If unexplained absence continues, support from the Education Welfare Service, social care or the police will be sought as necessary. This be recorded on CPOMS.
 - The head teacher will regularly remind parents/carers of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
 - Children or young people with **100% attendance** will be rewarded by the school with a certificate of attendance and small reward every term. Children whose attendance is **100%** will be rewarded with a **gift voucher** at the end of each academic year.

Identification of Pupils Giving Cause for Concern & Referral

- Identification is made by the class teacher (cause for concern)
- Concerns are passed to the person responsible for contacting parents/carers
- Person responsible will contact parents/carers with letter 1 (Appendix 1)
- Following the letter there will be two weeks' monitoring of the child's attendance
- If there is no improvement, at this point, attendance letter 2 (Appendix 2) will be sent and parents/carers will be invited in for a meeting
- If attendance has improved over the last four weeks we will just continue to monitor the child
- If there has been no improvement in attendance the school would refer the child to the Education Welfare Service (Appendix 3).
- The referral to the Education Welfare Service will consist of the referral form, copies of all correspondence to parents/carers and a print out of the child's attendance certificate from SIMS data base

Completing the Register

- The Governing Body is responsible for registering with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998, which is covered in the SFVS annual review.
- Electronic registers have to be printed out once a month and kept in the same way as manual registers. **These are legal documents.**

- The twice-daily requirement to register pupils can and should be perceived as an opportunity for the school to receive children from home, and serve as an introduction to the session.
- Emphasis is placed on the accurate twice daily completion of registers
- Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school
- Registers will be marked electronically
- The register will be marked using the symbols advised by DfE and CEC

Lateness

- School starts at 8.50am and children should be in the playground at this time. The electronic register will be sent to the office at 9.00 a.m. Any children arriving at school after 8.50am will be marked as “late” (L) and after 9.30am will be marked as “late after registration closes” (U).
- Parents/carers are asked to contact school before 9.30am if their child will not be attending school due to illness.
- Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.
- Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, further action will be taken. See Identification of Pupils Giving Cause for Concern and Referrals – the same process will apply (See Appendix 4)

Leave of Absence during term time

- **Parents/carers do not have the right to take their child out of school for a holiday.**
- A request for a leave of absence **must** be made by the parent who the pupil normally resides with.
- A child who is absent longer than 10 days after an agreed return date can legally be removed from the school roll and the parents/carers may be liable to prosecution.
- A child cannot have more than five days (10 Sessions) of unauthorised absence over the course of two consecutive half- terms. Fines may be issued by the Local Authority in these cases.
- In considering whether or not to authorise leave for a leave of absence, the Head Teacher will consider each case individually, taking into account the reason for the absence. The Head Teacher has been delegated this responsibility by the governing body.
- While decisions will be made on a case by case basis, requests will **normally be refused**.
- **A “LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM”** (Appendix 5) is available from the school office and on the school website. It must be completed in advance of the absence and returned to the school. It must clearly state on the form why it is necessary that this absence must be taken in term time.
- On receipt of the “Leave of Absence Request Form,” parents/carers will be sent a response indicating whether the Head Teacher is able to authorise your request or not.

- If parents/carers, contrary to what the governors have said, still decide to take their child out of school, then the absence will be coded as “**unauthorised.**” This may lead to the school referring the matter to the Local Authority requesting a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued.

Please refer to chart below for details of the FPN process including fines and timelines.

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	One child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	The parents will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates’ Court on the grounds the parents have failed to secure their child’s regular attendance	The parents will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates’ Court on the grounds the parents have failed to secure their children’s regular attendance

Fixed Penalty Notices have been introduced as part of the Government’s drive to improve attendance. These measures are severe but we believe that regular and high attendance is in every pupil’s best interests and helps to maximise their achievements and enjoyment of school.

This policy reflects accurately the current legislation and as a school, we have a duty to point this out to parents/carers.

Further details and background information can be found at the Cheshire East Council Website – http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/education_and_learning/schools/parents.aspx.

LEAVING SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL HOURS

- A child will only be permitted to leave school during school hours if permission has been sought and a parent, carer or designated person collects the child in person.
- Such persons will be asked to sign their child in/out of school accordingly for safeguarding and health and safety reasons.

Middlewich Primary School aims to have **ALL** children attending regularly and punctually and parents/carers need to know that should their child fail to attend in this way then the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. Parents/carers need to be aware that Cheshire East Schools work in co-operation with the Education Welfare Service and

need to be aware that Cheshire East Council in conjunction with Schools are operating Fixed Penalty Notices for non-attendance.

Middlewich Primary School understands the need for on-going communication with parents/carers and pupils regarding this policy, particularly those new to the school.

MONITORING OF ATTENDANCE

Local Authority Monitoring of Attendance

There are a range of processes to support Local Authority monitoring of attendance:

- All schools have a statutory obligation to provide information about attendance to the LA and the DfE via the school census returns. This enables national comparisons.
- The development of Electronic Registration means that the Local Authority should be able to access attendance data centrally, and could therefore monitor trends.
- The Education Welfare Service monitors attendance on behalf of the Local Authority through regular meetings with school staff and regular register checks. This focuses particularly on children with long-term absences, regular patterns of absence, return of children or after fixed term exclusions, admissions of children or young people for whom a place at the school has been agreed, children or cared for by the Local Authority.
- Monitoring the use and success of legal action to enforce attendance.
- The Admissions Team has a protocol for referral to the Education Welfare Service of Children who, for whatever reason, are without a school place.

School monitoring of Attendance and Attendance Targets

- The school sets attendance targets each year agreed by the senior staff and the governors.
- The targets are challenging but realistic, and based on attendance figures in previous years
- Every school must have a designated person responsible for attendance, and establish a routine that ensures that regular monitoring and review take place. At Middlewich Primary School this designated person is Mrs C Bertoni.
- Initial responsibility for identifying concerns lies with the class teacher.
- Prompt action will be taken by the school with regard to children whose absence is causing concern. We will liaise with the Education Welfare Officer, who may be asked to intervene in cases where the school has not been able to ascertain reasons for absence, or where other concerns exist.

To further monitor our school attendance figures we will:

- Compare figures with those of other local schools
- Compare figures with those for other cohorts within the school
- Compare figures for the same year group over time
- Consider attendance patterns over the year
- Analyse long-term absentees contribution to the figure
- Look for broken weeks – five separate one-day absences are more significant than a week's absence
- Look for same day absence each week
- Check reasons for absence
- Check absence notes

- Closely monitor vulnerable/“at risk” children
- Reward good/improved attendance
- Report to Education Welfare Officer long-term absentees/those for whom no reason for absence has been received.

School Monitoring of Lateness

The major principles of any late monitoring system are:

- it should ensure everyone in school is recorded in case of fire
- it should not allow children to come into school undetected

The School’s signing in system:

- enables the school office to keep a record and monitor punctuality
- makes it difficult for a student to enter a classroom late without staff acknowledgement
- ensures registers are consistently and correctly coded

Every Minute Counts

Lateness = Lost Learning

(Figures below are calculated over a school year)

5 minutes late each day	3 days lost!
10 minutes late each day	6.5 days lost!
15 minutes late each day	10 days lost!
20 minutes late each day	13 days lost!
30 minutes late each day	19 days lost!

Attendance Co-ordinator: Cheryl Bertoni / S La Porta

Education Welfare Officer: Glenn Haag

Policy reviewed annually by the Governing body.

Appendix 1

Dear Parents/Carers

ATTENDANCE

Following a recent register check, your child has been identified with less than 85% attendance for the dates

Some/all of these absences are unauthorised/authorised; I have enclosed a registration certificate with this letter so that you can see this for yourself.

His/her attendance will be closely monitored over the next two weeks and it is has not improved I will be inviting you to come into school to discuss the reasons why.

If there are particular problems, which we might help with, please do not hesitate to contact either your child's teacher or myself.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Bertoni
Learning Mentor

Appendix 2

Dear Parents/Carers

ATTENDANCE – CHILD'S NAME

You were informed by letter on the _____ that there was concern with regard to your child's attendance.

As there has been no improvement, I would like to invite you to meet with me _____ (Learning Mentor) and _____ to discuss this and also to see what help school can offer you.

I have made an appointment for you on:

Date: _____

Time: _____

If this date or time is inconvenient for you, please contact the school office to re-arrange the appointment.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Bertoni
Learning Mentor

Appendix 3

Dear Parents/Carers

ATTENDANCE – CHILD'S NAME

Unfortunately, despite school support your child's attendance has still not improved.

Therefore your case will now be transferred to our Education Welfare Officer, Mrs J Jenkins,
_____ who will contact you shortly.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Bertoni
Learning Mentor

Appendix 4

Child's Name _____ **Class** _____

Dear Parent/Carer

Your child's punctuality is currently giving cause for concern.

Late arrivals at school result in children missing the beginning of lessons and disturbing the rest of the class when they arrive. All children are expected to be in school at 8.50am every day. Please make sure that your child arrives at the correct time. Only 5 minutes late each day equates to 3 days lost each academic year.

We will continue to monitor punctuality, and hope to see an immediate and sustained improvement.

If there are particular problems, which we might help with, please do not hesitate to contact either your child's teacher or myself.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Bertoni
Learning Mentor

REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

The 2013 regulation amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The amendments give parents no entitlement to take their child out of school in term time. The Head teacher and the Governing Body will determine what the exceptional circumstances are.

FOR COMPLETION BY PARENT/CARER

You have requested the school's permission for leave of absence to be taken during term time. Before such authorisation is considered please complete the form below and return to the School Office. Completion of the form does not guarantee the leave of absence will be authorised.

Pupil's Name: _____ Class/Form: _____

Siblings at other schools: *Name:* _____

School: _____

Name: _____

School: _____

Dates of Leave of Absence: From: _____ To: _____

Please give full reason(s) for asking for leave of absence in term time

Signed: _____ (Parent/Carer) Date: _____

It is important to have read and understood the school's policy on attendance

PTO.....

TAKING YOUR CHILD OUT OF SCHOOL WITHOUT THE SCHOOL'S AUTHORISATION MAY RESULT IN THE SCHOOL REQUESTING THE LOCAL AUTHORITY TO ISSUE A FIXED PENALTY NOTICE TO EACH PARENT/CARER FOR EACH CHILD.

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For Completion by School:-

☐ Authorised

REGISTER CODE H

U ☐ sed

REGISTER CODE G

Reason holiday declined

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Copy to: Parent
 Pupil File
 Local Authority