



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 Attendance and Children Out of School Team 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
- 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)
-
- 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. If unexplained absence continues, support from the Attendance and Children Out of School Team, 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.

Identification of Pupils Giving Cause for Concern & Referral

- Identification is made by the class teacher (cause for concern)
- Concerns are passed to Mrs Bertoni who will contact parents/carers
- Mrs Bertoni will contact parents/carers via a phone call and letter 1 (Appendix 1) after 2 days of absence. This will be actioned on an individual basis
- 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 who 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 Attendance and Children Out of School Team. The referral to the Attendance and Children Out of School Team 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 8.45am and children should be in the playground at this time. The electronic register will be sent to the office no later than 8.55 a.m. Any children arriving at school after 8.45 am will be marked as “late” (L) and after 9.05am will be marked as “late after registration closes” (U).
- Parents/carers are asked to contact school before 9.00am 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. (Appendix 3)

Leave of Absence during term time

The Education Regulations originally set out in 2006 state that headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. This means that headteachers should not grant leave of absence for holidays or other leisure activities.

Current government guidance ([Working Together to Improve School Attendance May 2022](#)) makes it clear that parents must get permission from the headteacher if they want to take their child out of school during term time and in doing so must present a case as to why this should be considered.

In deciding whether or not to authorise leave for a leave of absence, the headteacher will consider each case individually, taking into account the reason for the absence. The headteacher 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**.

At Middlewich Primary School only exceptional circumstances will be authorised. To clarify, an exceptional circumstance is defined as a ‘one off event which is unavoidable.’

Some exceptional circumstances at Middlewich Primary School **may** include:

- Terminal illness or bereavement in the family requiring attendance at a funeral or a visit to a terminally ill relative.
- A family wedding or religious event that cannot be rearranged to take place outside of term time
- The family becoming homeless unexpectedly
- A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, such as a sporting event which sees the pupil representing their country or performing at a high level
- The pupils has a religious obligation that requires them to be absent from school.

- A family crisis, such as a domestic violence situation

However, even when the above categories are presented for consideration, this must still be balanced against current levels of attendance and as such every decision will be treated on an individual basis, taking all elements noted above into account.

The following circumstances will not be authorised (this list is not exhaustive):

- A family holiday (even when there have been some challenging circumstances within the family)
- Days off for birthdays
- Annual events such as the Cheshire Show

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 school year. Fines may be issued by the Local Authority in these cases.

A **“LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM”** (Appendix 4) 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 headteacher is able to authorise your request or not.

If parents, contrary to what the headteacher has 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	£80 per parent	£80 per child = £160 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£160 per parent	£160 per child = £320 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.

If parents do not request leave of absence, but the school has been provided with reasonable evidence to suggest the child is (or was) on holiday, the school can deem this as unauthorised and a fixed penalty notice may be issued.

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 Attendance and Children Out of School Team. Parents/carers need to be aware that Cheshire East Schools work in co-operation with the Attendance and Children Out of School Team 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 Attendance and Children Out of School Team 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 Attendance and Children Out of School Team 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 Attendance and Children Out of School Team, 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 Attendance and children Out of School Team 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!

Head Teacher: Gemma Reynolds

Attendance Co-ordinator: Cheryl Bertoni

Education Welfare Officer: Sarah Bailey

Reviewed Summer 2024

Appendix 1

Date

Dear

We noticed that your child has been off this week. They have been missed days from school.

Cheshire East Council are working with schools to try and improve school attendance because we know that school attendance makes such a big difference to children's futures. The Department for Education tell us 'school is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. Evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results.' (DFE 2023).

We also want to remind you that the Education Act 1996 section 444, requires you to make sure that your child attends school, on time, every time the school is open.

If there are any issues that may be impacting on your child's attendance, please contact Mrs Bertoni to discuss further.

Further Information can be found on the websites below

Attendance information

[School attendance and absence: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Attendance and children out of education \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Early help support

[Early Help Assessment \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Mental health support

[Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://cheshireeast.gov.uk)

[Anna Freud on my mind](#)

Yours sincerely

Mrs G Reynolds

Headteacher

Appendix 2

Date

Dear.....,

As you will be aware, good attendance and punctuality at school is very important for your child's wellbeing and academic progress. Reduced attendance means children miss vital learning opportunities that are often difficult to catch up with. Furthermore, being away from classmates can negatively impact friendships and damage their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Since the start of the school year, your child's attendance has dropped below 90%. Please see the registration information attached. This means they have missed the equivalent of 1 day for every 2 weeks of school. This is a significant amount of lost learning and if it continues will be a serious attendance issue.

Attendance & Impact of Missing School

Attendance	Number of school days missed each week	Number of school weeks missed over the year
90%	1/2 day per week	10 weeks and 4 days
80%	1 day per week	10 weeks and 3 days
70%	1 ½ days per week	10 weeks and 3 days
60%	2 days per week	10 weeks and 1 day
50%	2½ days per week	10 weeks

We must now work together to do everything we can to help you make sure your child's attendance improves.

It is important that we discuss this and to see what support the school can offer you andto improve their attendance. Kelly Gooch, a member of the school attendance team at Cheshire East Council, will contact you to arrange an appointment to meet you and discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. G. Reynolds

Headteacher

Appendix 3

Date

Dear

Child's Name _____ **Class** _____

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
Attendance Lead and Family Support Worker.

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.

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	One child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£80 per parent	£80 per child = £160 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£160 per parent	£160 per child = £320 per parent
After 28 days	You will be summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance	You will be summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your children's regular attendance
