



Malvern Way Attendance Policy - April 2016

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Government expects all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Due to changes contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, the Head teacher no longer has the discretion to allow up to 10 days in a school year for family holidays or extend leave for parents to visit their country of origin. Head teachers have the discretion to grant leave **only for exceptional circumstances**. The Head teacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if any leave is granted. Any absence not agreed as exceptional will be marked as **unauthorised**.

We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

- 1.2 The governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.
- 1.3 This policy has been agreed in conjunction with the Governing Body of Little Green Junior School.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 Authorised absence:

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note, emails or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Absence can be **authorised**:

- if the child is ill
- if the child had to attend a medical appointment
- for a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's family belongs
- for an exceptional circumstance such as a family bereavement or to take an external examination.

2.2 Unauthorised absence:

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent for all or part of a session.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Absence is **unauthorised** if:

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the explanation for absence is unsatisfactory and does not meet criteria for authorisation
- the Headteacher has concerns about a child's level of attendance or rate of progress.
- the child stays at home to look after other children.
- the child arrives after the registers have closed (after 9.05)

3 If a child is absent

- 3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.
- 3.2 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.
- 3.3 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.
- 3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then endeavour to be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

4 Requests for leave of absence during term time

- 4.1 Government regulations state that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are a few circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event. We expect parents to contact the school at least 2 weeks in advance to discuss this request.
- 4.2 Parents are expected to arrange family holidays during school holidays.
- 4.3 Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw their child during term time.
- 4.4 Parents wishing to apply to take a child out of school during term time should apply in writing to the Headteacher.

- 4.5 Written applications will be considered on an individual basis and parents may be expected to attend an interview with the Headteacher to discuss their request. Authorisation is not guaranteed. In the case of a sibling attending Little Green, there will be consultation between Headteachers.

5 Long-term absence

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it reasonably can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6 Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Attendance Improvement Officer, who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

7. Fixed Penalty Notices

7.1 Malvern Way Infant and Nursery school has, with the consent of the School Governors, adopted the use of Fixed Penalty Notices for school non-attendance. When a pupil's unauthorised absences reach 15 sessions (half a day is 1 session), the Head teacher, in agreement with the governing body, will apply to the LA for a penalty notice to be issued when:

- The pupil's absences have been unauthorised for at least 15 sessions in the previous and/or current term for example unauthorised holidays etc.

and

- The parent or carer is not willing to take responsibility for securing their children's attendance and has not co-operated with all proposed voluntary or supportive measures.

7.2 Amount and payment of penalty

The amount of the penalty shall be:

- a) £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice.
- b) £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice.

The penalty is issued to **each** parent for **each** absent child.

If the penalty notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the LA must either prosecute for the offence or withdraw the notice.

7.3 The governors reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

8 Rewards for good attendance

8.1 All the children who have 100 per cent attendance will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the end of the year.

9 Monitoring and review

9.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

9.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus, and in the annual governors' report.

9.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

9.5 The Headteacher will regularly monitor attendance and liaise with the Attendance Improvement Officer (at least termly). Where concerns regarding attendance are noted, the Headteacher will write to the parents in the first instance (see model letter - Appendix A). If this does not ensure an improvement, the AIO will be contacted for support.

9.6 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every **two** years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Signed Headteacher

Date

Signed Chairman of Governors

Date

Appendix A

Dear

I am writing to make you aware the local authority monitors the attendance of all pupils regularly to ensure good attendance levels are maintained (95%). Specific focus is given to the group of children whose attendance classifies them as **Persistent Absentees**. This means attendance has fallen below 90%.

Following the latest monitoring, your child's attendance is currently at%.
Review of their attendance shows me that (school to personalise according to attendance pattern recorded and periods of illness)

However going forward it is important that there is an immediate improvement and is in school every day. If there is no significant improvement you may be required to meet with our Attendance Improvement Officer to discuss the matter further.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this further.

Kind regards

Headteacher