



Moorlands School Attendance Policy

Introduction

Moorlands recognises that a high level of attendance is an essential foundation to pupils achieving positive outcomes and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility.

DfE (Department for Education) Guidance "Working together to improve school attendance" lays out the importance of attendance including legal aspects that all parties should be aware of.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

(DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance' Sept 2022)

Moorlands School wants all of its pupils to aspire to 100% attendance and the support of parents and carers is vital in achieving this. Where a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, within the education sector, this is seen as 'persistent absence'.

When a pupil is absent from school there is an impact on their learning. However, there is also in many cases an impact on the learning of other pupils.

We know that pupils experience health challenges to various degrees at various times; we will continue to be supportive and sympathetic in those cases and work with families. From time-to-time pupils and families get presented with exceptional opportunities and we will operate our discretion in these cases, through written application to the Headteacher.

In line with Government guidance, an exceptional opportunity does not include attending a sporting event, family holiday, pop concert, birthday event or 'getting away' early on a Friday. Moorlands School also does all it can to prepare pupils for adult working life beyond school by promoting good attendance and punctuality.

Absence through illness

Where a pupil needs to miss school due to ill health, parents are asked to:

- Contact the school by telephone (0113 278 5286) or email amelia.seaton@moorlands-school.co.uk and class teacher informing the school of the reason for their absence, and if possible, the expected date of their return
- Adopt a sensible approach to illness. Only keep pupils off school where it is absolutely necessary. Using the guidance provided by the NHS '[Is my child too ill for school?](#)' can provide parents with useful information.
- Respect the requirement for pupils who have had sickness or diarrhoea to stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least two days (48 hours)
- Produce medical evidence when requested (e.g., a doctor's note) to explain the reasons for prolonged absence or repeated absences.

It is the parent's responsibility to notify School if their child is going to be absent and the school expects parents to do so between 8am and 9am on the day of absence. If a pupil is not present for morning registration and the school has received no communication from home, a phone call will be made to parents by 9.30am.

Authorised Absence

The Department for Education has confirmed that schools, not parents, authorise absence. The main areas where the school will authorise absence are given below:

1. Illness

Where schools accept that a pupil is ill, they must authorise the absence but can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness.

2. Appointments

Dental and medical appointments are authorised absences but, where possible, such appointments should be made out of school hours.

3. Religious observance

In line with Local Authority recommendations, Moorlands School will afford children regardless of their faith up to 3 days of authorised absence per academic year for religious and cultural observance.

4. Exceptional circumstances / unavoidable causes

Authorised absence will be granted for compassionate reasons such as a serious family illness or bereavement.

Advance permission for absence from School at any time will be given only for exceptional circumstances. If absence is necessary, a written request should be addressed to the Headteacher. We respectfully request that parents adhere to school term dates and avoid booking holidays during term time.

Unauthorised Absence

If a student is absent from School without a valid reason, this will be classed as unauthorised absence.

Where parents decide to keep their child(ren) away from school without authorisation from the school, this will be classed as unauthorised absence; and will be recorded as such in the register. Authorised and unauthorised absence will be recorded in the short report, issued to parents in December, and the end of year report. Authorised absence will not be given retrospectively.

Please also be aware that school reference forms, which form part of the process for senior school application, require us to report on absence.

Punctuality and Registration (Mornings)

Punctual attendance at school is essential for pupil progress. Pupils who are late for school miss valuable lesson input and learning time, which can be disruptive both for them and their peers.

If this becomes a recurring issue, parents will be contacted to seek support and collaborate in improving a pupil's punctuality. All students must be present for registration with their Class Teacher at 8.30am. Late marks will be recorded on the short report, issued to parents in December, and the end of year report.

Monitoring Student Attendance

At Moorlands we recognise our duty to proactively manage and improve attendance. We fulfil this duty through daily attendance monitoring and by looking at patterns of absence over time. Attendance, absence and late marks are recorded on iSAMS - the school's management system - and regularly scrutinised.

Persistent absentees

The Department for Education has changed the definition of 'Persistent Absence' to deal with the reality of pupil absenteeism in schools and its impact on their learning. The Department has reduced the threshold at which a pupil is defined as 'Persistently Absent' to 10 per cent. (This is the equivalent to a child missing one day of school a fortnight.) Pupils whose attendance is below 90 per cent are now officially classed as 'Persistent Absentees' and as such the School is obliged to contact the parents if their child's attendance drops below that figure.

Attendance figures for all pupils will be reviewed on a half-termly basis to ensure that patterns of absence are investigated, and intervention is put in place where concerns remain.

For persistent absentees, the Deputy Head and Headteacher will implement a programme of monitoring and support.

- **Step 1** – parent/carer and Headteacher will discuss the absences and agree an action plan to improve attendance.
- **Step 2** – A letter summarising the discussion and a copy of the action plan is given to the parent/carer.
- **Step 3** – After 6 weeks the attendance is reviewed by the school. If the percentage has improved to above 90% half-termly monitoring is implemented.
- If the percentage remains below 90% the parent/carer is invited to a second meeting with school staff to discuss the absences, where further, more formal, actions will be taken. This could be considered as a Child Missing in Education. It could also trigger a review of the pupil’s place in the school, in accordance with the School’s Terms and Conditions.

| % Attendance | Days lost | Weeks lost (per year) | Comment |
|--------------|-----------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 100 | 0 | 0 | Perfection |
| 98 | 3.5 | 0.7 | Good |
| 95 | 8.75 | 1.75 | Concerning |
| 93 | 12.25 | 2.45 | |
| 90 | 17.5 | 3.5 | Serious concerns |
| 85 | 26.25 | 5.25 | |
| 80 | 35 | 7 | |

Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS)

It is compulsory for children to attend school full-time the term after their fifth birthday. However, we expect and encourage parents who have children attending Nursery and moving into Reception to adhere to this policy, in regard to punctuality and absence. If your child is ill and unfit for school, please contact the school office on 0113 278 5286 and email Miss Cooper on wendy.cooper@moorlands-school.co.uk. If your child attends Nursery and becomes unwell during the day, you will be contacted to collect them.

Other relevant policies

This guidance should be read in conjunction with other School policies including the School’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy and Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy (SEND).

This policy also draws on specific guidance and material from the following publications:

- [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#), DfE May 2022
- [Children Missing Education \(CME\)](#), DfE September 2016
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#) (KCSIE), DfE September 2023

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