

Manor Junior School

Governors Policy for Attendance

Agreed by staff: May 2004

Ratified by Governors: 28.4.10

Review Date by: 31.4.13

At Manor Junior School we aim to work closely with parents/carers to achieve and maintain high standards of attendance.

In order to achieve this, the school will:

- Promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere in school, where children feel safe and that their presence is valued
- Promote parents support of this policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education
- Create attitudes towards high standards of attendance and punctuality, which pupils should retain throughout life
- Ensure that attendance is maintained effectively and absences and lateness are followed up promptly
- Meet legal requirements, with particular reference to identifying unauthorised absence
- Keep accurate registration documents identifying authorised/unauthorised absences and check registers regularly, to note unexplained absences and identify patterns of absence and lateness if they are occurring
- Raise parental awareness of the importance of attendance and punctuality through a variety of strategies
- Involve other agencies eg Education Welfare service, Social Services, Educational Psychologist, when difficulties arise
- Ensure all staff are aware of School policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality
- Ensure good liaison when a change of school occurs

Lateness Procedure

- Parents **should notify** the school before 9.15am if a child is going to be absent
- If a child is absent and a message has not been received by 9.15 am office staff will telephone parents to find out why the pupil is absent
- A child arriving after 8.45am will be marked late
- A child arriving after 9.15 am will be marked absent (this absence will be recorded as unauthorised if no reason is given). An accompanying adult should sign in children arriving at reception after these times.
- If the absence is known in advance, a written note is required to inform the school prior to the period of absence.
- If a child has any unexplained absences a letter asking for an explanation of the absence is sent to parents. The attendance system used in school automatically records any unexplained absences as unauthorised absence
- A list of children with less than 80% attendance is produced at the end of each half term and reported to the Education Welfare Service

Medical and Dental Appointments

- If possible routine appointments should be made outside school hours
- If an appointment is made in school time an explanatory note should be sent to school on the day before the appointment
- Parents should sign children out and back in again when attending appointments during the school day

Where there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness, school and education welfare officers can refer the matter to a school doctor or GP. If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period or the school notices a pattern of school absence emerging, early contact should be made with the EWS or School Health Service.

Holidays

Parents should avoid taking their children away during term time.

Family holidays should not be taken in term time.

In exceptional circumstances the headteacher will consider the reasons for the holiday, the pupil's past attendance, and the effect the absence will have on the pupil's learning. The headteacher will not normally give permission simply because holidays cost less during term time or because of the appropriateness of the climate or 'we're going together with family and friends'.

Holidays for Year 6 pupils will not be authorised under any circumstances during the months of April and May for reasons of preparation for and administration of SATs (National Curriculum Standard Assessment Tasks) and are not encouraged at any time during the year prior to SATs. In addition, holidays across the school will be discouraged and not authorised during the months of September and May due to the induction of pupils into new classes and annual testing.

Applying for absence for holidays

If a parent takes a holiday during term time, a statutory appendix 1 form must be completed well in advance of booking the holiday.

Authorised leave of absence in exceptional circumstances is intended for the purpose of one family holiday **only** during an academic year and is not an entitlement to a cumulative total of 10 days holiday on a number of separate occasions.

If a pupil goes on holiday during term time without the headteacher's permission, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the Education Welfare Service will be informed. If a parent takes a child on holiday after the request has been refused and the parent warned in writing the EWS will consider prosecution.

Unauthorised Absence

Her Majesty's inspectors define unauthorised absence as:

"Absence from school for any period as a result of a pre-meditated or spontaneous act by the pupil or parent or both. This includes parentally condoned absence." (Education observed, No 13)

Examples of parentally condoned absences include absences when:

- A parent is ill
- A parent is using the pupil as a child minder
- A pupil is supporting other members of the family
- A parent wants company
- A parent gives in to a pupil who wants to stay at home
- It is a pupil's birthday
- A parent does not care whether the pupil attends school
- A parent has taken the pupil shopping
- A parent cannot control the pupil
- Family holidays/celebrations

All unauthorised absence will be noted on the child's school record and Annual Report to Parents and reported to the Educational Welfare Service as well as included in Government Data.

Travelling families

Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if it is believed that the family intends to return.

Strategies to promote and maintain high standards of Attendance and Punctuality

Children at this school are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school, and whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time, will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas.

Registers will be checked for regular attendance by the designated admin staff. Teaching staff should also be aware and report any concerns to the headteacher. The register is a legal document and may be used as evidence in a Court of Law.

The Headteacher will consult/discuss with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) when

- a) Attendance less than 80%
- b) Contacts with home have not brought about any improvement in attendance
- c) Poor communication with home regarding explanations for absence/lateness

The headteacher will refer to EWO when there is

- a) 2 weeks (10 school days) continuous absence
- b) 30 absences in a 10 week period
- c) 30 late sessions over a 10 week period

The EWO can only proceed when the referral documents are completed correctly, (RCS1 Referral, RCS2 Attendance Certificate)

ATTENDANCE POLICY REFERENCE DOCUMENT (For School reference only)

Completing the register

Registers should be completed in pencil. Mark only children who are absent as the computer recognises that everyone else will be here. If a child is late for the session mark both the present and absent columns and the computer will read this as being late. Any alterations must be unambiguous. Children should not mark the register under any circumstance.

Symbols used in class registers

Present	/	am
Present	\	pm
B		Educated off site
C		Other authorised circumstances
D		Dual registration
E		Excluded
F		Extended family holiday (agreed)
G		Family holiday (not agreed)
H		Family holiday (agreed)
I		Illness
J		Interview
L		Late (before 9.15 a.m.)
M		Medical appointment
N		No reason yet provided for absence
O		Unauthorised absence
P		Approved sporting activity
R		Religious observance
S		Study leave
T		Traveller absence
U		Late (after 9.15 a.m.)
V		Educational visit or trip
W		Work experience
X		School closed to pupils
Y		Enforced closure
!		Non-compulsory school age absence
#		School closed to pupils and staff
*		Pupil not on roll
-		All should attend – no mark recorded

If a child has L (late marks) 3 times in one week/4 times in two weeks/or a regular pattern of lateness every week for a month, a letter will be sent to the parents asking them either to come into school if there is a difficulty causing lateness, or to ensure punctuality is kept. Repeated unexplained lateness, or lateness with no acceptable reason, will be referred to the EWO and Social Services, if appropriate.

If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know in advance.

Authorised or Unauthorised

After each absence a letter of explanation should be provided by the parent/carer, unless a telephone call had been received

The ultimate responsibility to authorise an absence rests with the Headteacher.

In the case of illness the school has the right to request further information.

We use the forms for sickness when parents phone in and this is used as notification.

Key Points

The following points may assist schools in categorising absence. The following bullet points cannot cover every eventuality and ultimately schools will be expected to exercise their reasonable discretion in certain circumstances.

- Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school
- Whilst schools should recognise that individual pupils and families may have problems, the aim should always be to expect regular attendance
- Schools should set out their policy on absence in the school prospectus. This is useful if parents later challenge the school's request for further information.
- Lateness should be actively discouraged
- Where a pupil is absent without prior authorisation an explanation is required. If one is not forthcoming (for whatever reason) and a valid reason for absence does not apply (eg religious observance) the absence should be treated as unauthorised.
- If the school is not satisfied with the explanation offered then further information should be sought from parents and the absence continues to be treated as unauthorised.
- If the school remains dissatisfied with the explanations offered, then the absence should be recorded as unauthorised. In the case of the absence explained as illness, the following could be considered;
 - Parents can be asked to provide medical evidence to support the reasons given but schools should remember that they are under no obligation to do this
 - The school or EWO can refer the matter to a doctor working in the school health service.