



# Morton CE Primary School

## Attendance Policy 2022 – 2023

**Policy Co-ordinator:** Executive Headteacher/Head of School  
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**Hand in Hand, Together we can...Respect, Achieve, Enjoy, Believe**

***“And so encourage one another and help one another, just as you are now doing.” 1  
Thessalonians 5.11***

## **Introduction**

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil’s absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child’s regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## **Promoting Regular Attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody’s responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers details of their own child’s attendance at parent’s evening where concerns have been made.
- Report to parents/carers annually on their child’s attendance with the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child’s attendance fall below the school’s target for attendance of 95%.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying class achievements.
- Reward good attendance through individual certificates and prizes. (See Appendix 3)

## **Understanding Types of Absence**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent feels they need support getting their child to school regularly and on time then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse or the Parental Support Adviser.

## **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance is below 90% across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

Any PA pupils whose attendance falls below 85%, and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include the allocation of additional support. We may also use circle time, individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

## **Absence Procedures**

If your child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9:30am. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take the call.
- Or they can call into school and report to reception.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by 9:30am;

If absences persist we may:

- Invite you in to discuss the situation with class teacher and then Executive Headteacher/Head of School
- Issue a fixed penalty notice where unauthorised absence exceeds 10 consecutive days or 20% of school sessions in one term. (see Appendix 4)

## **The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority.

He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

## **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 9am and we expect our children to be in the school building before this time ready to line up when the gates/doors open at 8:45am. Gates will be closed at 9:10am, any child arriving after that will have to enter school by the front entrance.

Registers are marked by 9:10am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the staff to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

## **Illness and Medical Appointments**

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment. The school office should be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning for the duration of the absence.

## **Holidays in Term Time**

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and we do urge parents not to take any holiday during the school year. School will only agree to term time holiday in **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**.

Parents who wish to make a request for leave must arrange a face-to face meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership team to explain the reasons. All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school a maximum of 10 days in any academic year may be authorised. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

We will not agree leave during term time under the following circumstances:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods: SATS for Year 2 and 6 pupils, Phonics screening for Year 1 pupils.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes a high level of absence.

We strongly recommend that parents gain consent for any holiday in term time before booking your holiday. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice. Where a pupil fails to return to school within 10 days of the agreed return date, school has the power to remove the pupil from the school roll and offer the place to a waiting family.

The minimum level of attendance for any child at Morton Church of England Primary School is 95% attendance. We will keep parents updated regularly on their child's progress.

## APPENDIX 1

### Reasons and codes for Absence

A set of standard codes are used consistently within the register. These codes are input into the electronic register as required and are used to give depth of meaning to the register and provide statistical meaning to the absences.

<b>Code</b>	<b>School Meaning</b>	<b>Statistical Meaning</b>	<b>Physical Meaning</b>
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Educated off site (Not dual reg)	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
E	Excluded	Authorised	Out for whole session
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised	Out for whole session
I	Illness (not med/dental appoints)	Authorised	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before reg closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Present	Out for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised	Out for whole session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Z	Pupil not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for whole session

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### Parents' Responsibility:

- It is the statutory duty of every parent/guardian to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. (Section 444(1) Education Act 1996)
- Keep the school fully informed on all matters that might affect attendance and their child in school.
- Telephone school on the first day of any absence to inform school of the reason
- Provide a note confirming the reason for absence on the child's return to school
- If attendance becomes a problem – work with the school to improve matters.
- Give serious consideration to whether it is appropriate or necessary to request term time absence.
- Make application for any term time leave of absence prior to proposed dates.

#### Teachers' Responsibility

- Registers taken at 9:10am and 1:00pm. Lateness is indicated if a child arrives later than 9:20am.
- Enter correct code for absence in reg. (see Appendix 1). Do not use unauthorised until all avenues have been explored i.e. telephone call, letters. Executive Headteacher/Head of School, EWO.
- Record concerns and discussions with parents re absence and lateness. It is the class teachers' initial responsibility to discuss persistent lateness and absence with parents.
- Inform Executive Headteacher/Head of School of any persistent absence or lateness concerns in class.
- Through daily practices, make all pupils aware of the importance and significance of good attendance and punctuality.

#### Office Staff Responsibility

- Inform class teachers of daily absence messages.
- Phone parents on the first morning of absence if there has been no message form parents.
- Only office staff may amend children on the register.
- Print off weekly, termly and annual data for Executive Headteacher/Head of School.
- Print off Attendance summary sheets for individual children at the end of each term and send to parents.

#### Executive Headteacher/Head of School Responsibility

- Monitor weekly, termly and annual attendance data and highlight to teachers any low attendance concerns.
- Raise parental awareness of implications of low attendance and lateness and school and DfE expectations.
- Prepare letters to parents at the start of each term to inform of previous terms attendance %.
- Prepare letters to inform parents when a child's absence is giving cause for concern and is thus being monitored.
- Organise weekly, termly and annual award systems across the school.

#### EWO Responsibilities

- Support and follow up matters of concern raised by school.
- Establish reasons and meet/discuss with parents ways to solve attendance/lateness problems (Attendance Panel Meeting)
- In partnership with school, if there is no improvement the school will undertake the appropriate legal proceedings with the principals of The Children's Act 1989, Prosecutions Educations Supervision Orders and Attendance Orders

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Rewards Systems for Good Attendance**

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.

#### Annually

Children with 100% attendance for the entire Year will receive a School Certificate, and reward presented in assembly in the last week of Term 6.