

Mulberry Wood Wharf Primary

Attendance Policy

Approval Body:	Mulberry Stepney Green and Mulberry Wood Wharf LGB
Approval Date:	November 2023
Implementation Date:	November 2023
Review Date:	November 2024
Policy Version:	2

**This policy supports Article 28 of the UN Rights of the child
“You have the right to a good quality education”**

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school and is related to the following legislation:

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- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2005
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2022

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Advice on School Attendance (DfE)
- Improving Attendance at School (DfE)

We believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of pupils.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils. We believe high attainment depends on good attendance.

We expect all school personnel to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school. School personnel have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances, it is our policy to be supportive of the child and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. Also, at times we must give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

We believe truancy is a matter that we treat very seriously as we feel pupils are not only losing valuable learning time, but they are putting themselves at serious risk as the school and their parents are not aware of their whereabouts.

We believe it is essential to have a strong working relationship with the Education Welfare Service which provides support for pupils and their families in order to promote good pupil attendance and to reduce truancy.

The school only authorises leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and in authorising a holiday in term time we will consider the child's attendance record, the child's age, the reason for the trip, the time in the academic year and the employment difficulties that parents face by taking holidays in school holiday time.

Aims:

- To keep children safe
- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- To have in place procedures to prevent truancy.
- To work with other schools to share good practice to improve this policy.

How will we achieve our aims?

The school uses SIMs to record and report attendance

The role of the Head teacher

- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- create a culture which encourages attendance;
- address all school-based causes of poor attendance such as bullying, racism etc;
- to ensure that there is a system of daily monitoring of school attendance via the First Day Contact Supervisor by using an appropriate and effective registration system;
- ensure registration is taken at the start of the morning session and at the beginning of the afternoon session;
- ensure school personnel are fully trained in the registration process and with the appropriate categorisation of absence;
- ensure pupils are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day;
- monitor attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, first language, eligibility for Free School Meals, special educational needs and persistent absentees;
- monitor trends by using data effectively to help strategic planning;
- ensure early intervention to prevent absenteeism or truancy and to put into effect a range of procedures to deal with this problem;
- target intervention and support to those children that have been highlighted as poor attenders;

- agenda attendance and truancy at periodic meetings with school personnel;
- work closely with the Education Welfare Service;
- attend termly meetings with the AWO if appropriate;
- have in place a system for parents to report a child's absence;
- question any parental explanation for pupil absence if there is doubt as to the validity of the explanation;
- expect an explanation for every absence and if one is not forthcoming then the absence will be categorised as unauthorised;
- report to the Governing Body every term attendance figures and progress towards achieving set targets;
- remind parents of their commitment to this policy;
- ensure that there is a meeting with parents if they have applied for a holiday during school time;
- ensure school personnel are aware that unauthorised absence is absence without approval from the Headteacher and includes all unexplained absences;
- when considering an application for term time holiday request will consider the:
 - time of year of the proposed trip
 - length and purpose of the holiday
 - impact on continuity of learning
 - circumstances of the family
 - overall attendance of the child
 - wishes of the parents
- apply a consistent approach across the school and ensure equity for all pupils;
- promote the importance of attendance during collective worship;
- publicise good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body;
- award good attendance rewards to pupils when they have achieved 100% attendance;
- organise home tuition with the local support services for pupils with long term illness provided they are well enough to undertake the work;
- adopt procedures for reintegrating long-term absentees;
- organise training for school personnel on the use and understanding of attendance codes and authorised and unauthorised attendance;
- improve teaching in order to improve pupil engagement;
- work closely with the Inclusion governor and Parent Support Worker;
- strengthen links with external agencies who engage with and support families;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff especially on bullying and the needs of vulnerable groups;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by:
 - monitoring trends and patterns as highlighted in attendance data
 - achieving results above the national average
 - looking at results from parent, pupil and school personnel questionnaires
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.

The role of Teachers

Every teacher is responsible for the marking of the class register for every morning and afternoon session. The register must be taken as the first activity. Teachers must follow the appropriate codes.

In the event of a digital failure attendance must be marked in red and absence in black on paper copies.

When a teacher knows the reason for absence it must be written in the register.

The role of Parents / Carers

All parents / carers are asked to sign the home-school agreement when their child joins the school which emphasises the expectation that a child must be always in school.

Parents are expected to let the school know on the first day of absence the reason for the absence. If no reason is recorded, then the office staff will phone on each day of absence to establish the reason why the child is not at school.

Any letters given to the class teacher to explain absence must be given to the Executive Headteacher. If the office receives an explanation as to why a child is not in school, then they must write it in the register.

Children who are attending medical appointments must show a card before it can be authorised and children allowed out of school to attend.

Only the school can authorise an absence.

Any queries should be referred to the Executive Headteacher.

Leave in Term Time

Parents must inform the school if they intend to take leave. The form is available from any of the office staff or on the website and should be returned to the office or admin@mulberryschoolstrust.org when completed.

Depending on the circumstances of the requested leave, the Executive Headteacher may contact families to explain that the leave is not authorised and that after 21 days their child's place at the school will be lost, and their child's name will come off the roll. This means that on return there will be no guarantee of a place at the school.

The school may also decide to fine the parents if children are taken out of school without leave.

Religious Observation

Families may apply for leave for religious observance using the Leave in Term Time form

Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments

We encourage these appointments to take place out of school time in order not to disrupt the child's education. The school will need to see an appointment card.

Further concerns about absences

The Executive Headteacher will regularly monitor the register to look for patterns of absence. Teachers should bring such absences to their attention. When a child's attendance is causing the school concern then families will be alerted so that they can start to improve before it becomes a serious issue.

If a child's absence falls below 90% then they will be recorded on the Persistent Absent list which is monitored by the Government. You will be invited to work with the school to look at ways in which you can improve your child's attendance figures. The school would expect to see an improvement straight away.

Pupils who have continuing absences on medical grounds will be referred to the school nurse in order to determine whether it is reasonable or whether the school should ask for more support for the child from the doctor.

If parents continue to fail to bring their child to school, then the borough has the option of taking the parents to court.

Dealing with Truancy

If a pupil is thought to be playing truant, then the school will immediately inform:

- the police
- the parent/carer;

All truants will receive:

- sanctions;
- support;
- discussions with the EWO to understand the seriousness of the matter;
- a programme of monitoring and support

The Police must be informed immediately if a pupil leaves school without prior permission

Children who have left the school

If a child leaves the school to transfer to a new one, then the destination school will be checked to ensure that the child has started there, as part of our safeguarding procedures. Any child who is not enrolled at another school will be reported to the AWA as a child who is missing from education.

See the Child Protection policy for further information on Children Missing in Education

Home Schooling

Any parent has the right to withdraw their child from school to educate them at home. Parents are required to inform the school by letter that this is what they intend to do. The school will then inform the LA who will ensure that the correct procedures are followed.

Reporting Attendance to Parents

- Parents will be informed via the newsletter of the school's attendance target for the year
- Every year the Executive Headteacher will send an outline of the attendance policy home in October
- The newsletter will have each classes weekly attendance figure for parents to note
- When class attendances are regularly lower than the target figure the Executive Headteacher will hold a parent's meeting to explain the effect on the child's education and the possible consequences for the parent
- The number of half days that a child is absent is recorded on the annual report and it will be stated whether this is poor, satisfactory or good

Celebration of Attendance

- Attendance certificates given out to each Key Stage for the best attendance at assembly each week or in the EY classrooms
- The class with the highest attendance acknowledged in the newsletter
- 100% attendance earns a class extra playtime
- Termly certificates given out to children who achieve 97% +
- Termly and Yearly certificates and medals given out to those children who attend 100% of the year
- At the end of the year those children who have attended for a 100% will be given a reward.

Lateness

If a child arrives in school after 9.10 a.m. when the register has been taken, then they will be given a late mark. Parents / Carers must sign the late book and state why the child is late.

Persistent lateness will follow the same procedures as persistent absence

Punctuality

For children to do their best they need to be in school at the start of the day. Patterns of lateness are monitored, and any concerns will be quickly addressed with parents/carers. If there is not a quick and sustained improvement, then the school will take further action which could involve Early Help intervention from Social Care.