



Moat Farm Junior School Trust

Attendance Policy 2019-2020

Reviewed and updated September 2019.

Attendance Policy Guidelines for Primary and Secondary Schools

These guidelines have been written in response to the DfE.

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly, to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The government expects:

Schools and local authorities to:

- *Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;*
- *Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,*
- *act early to address patterns of absence.*
- *Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.*
- *All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.*

All schools should have effective systems and procedures for encouraging regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance. Schools are responsible for identifying the role of all members of staff who play a part in the registration procedure.

Moat Farm Junior School Trust

Attendance Policy

Mission Statement:

Moat Farm Junior School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which therefore maximises opportunities for every student to realise their true potential.

We strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels valued and secure.

All staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure that every they attend school regularly and punctually.

At Moat Farm Junior School

- We believe in working in partnership with parents and carers/pupils/governors.
- We have high expectations of all and that includes good attendance at school.
- We believe that good attendance levels maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise their full potential.
- We believe good and regular attendance is when a pupil reaches at least 96% attendance.
- We believe that good attendance raises levels of achievement.
- Attendance of below 90% is classed as persistent absenteeism and is a cause for concern.

Aims

- To improve the overall percentage of pupil attendance at school, striving to meet the school attendance target of 96.7%.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all stakeholders.
- To provide guidance and support for parents and families.
- To operate an effective system of attendance and lateness analysis.
- To continue with the framework that defines agreed roles and responsibilities regarding attendance monitoring.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- To implement an effective system of rewards and sanctions.
- To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following a significant period of absence.

Why Regular Attendance is important:

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

Ensuring a pupil's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of all parents / carers, and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

At Moat Farm Junior School, we expect all of our pupils to attend school every day that they possibly can. Research findings show there is a strong correlation between good attendance and high achievement.

If a pupil has 90% attendance through their primary and secondary education; it means that they have missed the equivalent of a whole year off school.

100%	Excellent attendance	Full attendance and no days missed from school – the best chance of success
96%	Good attendance	8 days missed from school
95%	Below the expected level of attendance	9 days missed – less chance of success and makes it harder for your child to make progress
91%	Below the expected level of attendance and needs to improve	18 days missed
90%	Worrying and attendance needs to improve	18 days missed (persistent absence threshold). Your child will find it very hard to make progress.
85%	Poor attendance and must improve	28 days missed
80%	Poor attendance and must improve	38 days missed

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of all stakeholders. To support this focus, school will:

- Follow a fast-track approach to managing pupil absence through quick and early intervention. We aim to work with families to tackle problems as soon as they become apparent. This may include telephone calls, letters home, invitations to attend school meetings, announced and unannounced home visits, group work and individual student mentoring.
- Provide details of class and year group attendances/punctuality in school's regular newsletters and on the school website.
- Provide parents with data relating to their child's attendance/punctuality at Parents' Evenings.
- Celebrate good attendance/punctuality at our weekly Congratulations Assemblies.
- Celebrate efforts relating to individual and class attendance/punctuality at the end of each term.

Parents will:

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. This means being on time every day and reaching and maintaining attendance of 96%, at any given point throughout the school year.
- Support school in their attempts to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- Inform school immediately if there are any barriers to their child attending school.
- Notify the school immediately on the occasions when their child is too ill to attend school.

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, preferably in writing.

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 agreement has been given. (This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.) Unauthorised absences include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained or when school do not receive a message for the absence.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (after the close of register).
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Leave of absence that has not been agreed by the school (including term time holidays).
- Absences for which medical evidence has not been provided but has been requested by the school.

This list is not exhaustive and the authorisation of absence is judged on circumstances at the time.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. Help and support is always available at school should parents require this. If support is required, please contact the school reception and one of the Attendance Team will be happy to help.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling (i.e. has attendance below 90%) at any given time during the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. All schools are obliged to report pupils who meet persistent absence thresholds every half term to the DfE. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where necessary.

We monitor all absence thoroughly and closely track any student with attendance of 95% or below. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark (90%), or is at risk of moving towards that mark (below 95%), is given priority and parents will be informed of this.

All pupils with 95% attendance or below are monitored weekly and contact is made with parents. All cases below 95% are automatically made known to the school's Education Welfare Officer, who works to support these students and their families to improve attendance. Pupils who have attendance of less than 95% are reviewed in a weekly meeting, which is attended by the Attendance team and chaired by the Deputy Head Teacher. At this meeting, actions are agreed for each pupil.

Procedures

Registration

- At Moat Farm we take a register twice a day – once at the start of the morning at 8.55am and once at the start of the afternoon session at 1.15pm.
- The register is opened at 8.55am and closed at 9.10am. In exceptional circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, we may keep the register open for a longer period.
- It is the responsibility of the register marker, (class teacher or their cover), to record the pupil as present (/) or absent (N).
- We keep our register electronically using the MIS system 'SIMS'.
- The data is captured by calling out names from class the register. The information is then entered onto the system as the class teacher or their cover calls out names. The office staff will enter a pupil onto the system, using the appropriate code, should they arrive late to school after the register has closed.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. It is seriously detrimental to a child's learning and positive start to the school day. If your child arrives after 8.55am, they miss a short class registration period where useful information is given relating to the rest of the day and the vital introduction to an English or Maths lesson that starts promptly at 9.05am. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons for teachers and other pupils, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

Minutes late per day	Learning time lost in a year
5 minutes	3½ days
10 minutes	7 days
15 minutes	10 ½ days
20 minutes	14 days
30 minutes	21 days

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8.55am and we expect your child to be in the classroom at that time. Registers are marked as soon after 8.55am as possible (by 9.00am at the latest) and immediately sent electronically to the school office. Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.10am the registers will be officially closed. In accordance with regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a legal action if the problem persists.

You are encouraged at any time to approach school if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We will do whatever we can to support you and help overcome the barriers. However, if lateness persists you will be asked to meet with the School's Education Welfare Officer to discuss and resolve the problem.

- Pupils who arrive after the registration period, but prior to the register being closed, are recorded as 'L' (late before registers closed). Statistical meaning = Present. Pupils who arrive after the register is closed, are recorded as 'U' (late after registers closed). Statistical meaning = Unauthorised absence

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence. This may be done via a telephone call to our number 0121 552 1215 or come into school and report to reception giving information regarding your child's absence personally.

If your child is absent we will:

- Record your child's absence on their class register.
- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. This should not be necessary as it is the parent's responsibility to inform school regarding a pupil absence.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Education Welfare Officer if absences persist.
- Please note we monitor whole school attendance below 95% on a weekly basis, with a particular focus on pupils with below 90% attendance (persistent absentees).
- If a child is absent for 3 consecutive days and all attempts of making contact have failed, the school may contact the Police to discuss the matter, and request that a 'safe and well' visit be carried out.
- Parents must be aware that if the school is not informed of where a child is in school time, the child may be referred to relevant agencies for safeguarding purposes. If a child is absent for 20 school days or more and cannot be located after diligent enquiries have been made, they will be removed from the school's roll and recorded as a 'missing child.' The child will then lose their school place at Moat Farm Junior School.

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils:

- To attend school regularly and punctually.
- To arrive in school by 8.55am.
- To attend registration promptly. Those who register after 9.05am and 1.20pm will be given a late mark.
- To sign out at the office when leaving the site for approved appointments.
- To arrive to school, ready to engage in positive learning.

Parent/carer:

- To ensure their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- To notify the school on the first day of absence before 9.25am.
- To contact school again if the child is still absent on the second day.
- To provide a note to explain any absences on the first day the pupil returns to school. This is a reverse burden of proof. It is the parent's job to give school actual evidence.
- To take their family holidays in the school holiday period.
- To provide the school with a telephone number on which they can be contacted in case of emergency. (NB: if a parent does not supply this information and the school has concerns they may contact Children's Social Care or the Police).

Class teacher:

- To keep an accurate attendance register.
- To praise pupils for good attendance and punctuality.
- To monitor pupil absence / lateness.
- To inform SLT when absence is impacting on achievement.

School Leadership:

- To have a named Governor for attendance.
- To appoint an Attendance Leader who is a senior member of staff with responsibility for the strategic management of the attendance agenda and for reporting absence to the DfE (currently Deputy Head).
- Intervene early when individual pupil absence gives cause for concern.
- Develop a multi-agency response to the attendance agenda.

The Education Welfare Officer:

The school employs an Education Welfare Officer 3 days per week. She is based in school and supports the school on all matters regarding school attendance. Parents are encouraged to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems relating to attendance and punctuality. This usually has a successful conclusion.

If there are ongoing concerns regarding a pupil's attendance, the school may refer a child's irregular attendance to the Attendance and Prosecution Service within the Local Authority. Please note this can also include poor punctuality, which is recorded as late after the close of register and therefore unauthorised absence. The Attendance and Prosecution Service will also try to resolve the situation.

However, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, Attendance and Prosecution Officers can refer the matter to the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school.

Leave of Absence and Holidays in Term Time

All requests for leave of absence and holidays in term time should be requested by completing the school's leave of absence form, which is available from the school office. Any requests for leave should be made in writing to the Head teacher 6 weeks before the leave is required. Leave of absence needs to be requested and agreed before any tickets/flights/firm bookings are made, this will allow time for the request to be considered and discussion to be held as required. Supporting information should also be provided with the request, to explain the circumstances and the need for leave to be taken in term time. Requests for leave of absence in term time for holidays, visiting relatives and weddings are not normally agreed by the Head Teacher.

If the reason for leave is due to an emergency, parents should contact the school office to arrange to discuss this with a member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Education Welfare Officer.

Please be aware, leave can only be authorised on the content of the request. A request for leave of absence form must be completed fully, and must include details of all people who have care of the child. Incomplete requests will be declined and will not be considered, which will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised. Parents will normally be informed of the decision in writing. All letters will be kept on file. If the child takes time off when leave has not been granted, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Term time holidays

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's academic progress as much as any other absence, and we expect parents to help us by not taking pupils away in school time.

We do not permit holidays in term time and will not authorise requests for leave of absence for this reason. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time, are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Holidays should be taken in school holiday time of which we have plenty of weeks available.

Holidays taken in term time may be referred to Sandwell's Attendance and Prosecution Service, who may then contact parents regarding the leave taken. Parents taking unauthorised leave in term time may be subject to a penalty notice fine being issued by the Local Authority. This is a £60 fine (per child, per parent), if paid within 21 days but rises to £120 (per child, per parent) if not paid within 21 days but paid within 28 days. If fines are not paid, the Attendance and Prosecution Service can refer the matter to Magistrates Court.

Other reasons for extended absence and request for leave of absence.

FGM

All staff are trained and made aware about possible reasons for extended absence from school. Female genital mutilation is a form of child abuse common to some African, Asian and Middle Eastern communities in the UK. The age at which girls are subject to FGM varies greatly from shortly after birth to any time up to adulthood. Victims are usually aged between four and ten, primary school age. It is illegal in the UK to subject a child to female genital mutilation (FGM) or to take a

child abroad to undergo the procedure – Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. School staff should be alert to the following indicators:

1. The family comes from a community that is known to practise FGM
2. The family may be preparing for the child to take a holiday, arranging vaccinations, planning or requesting absence from school and a child may talk about a long holiday to a country where the practice is prevalent
3. A child may confide that she is to have a 'special procedure' or to attend a special occasion

Forced Marriage and absence

A 'forced' marriage is distinct from a consensual 'arranged' marriage because it is without the valid consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. A child who is forced into marriage is at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Forced marriage may also become apparent when other family issues are addressed, e.g. domestic violence, self-harm, child abuse or neglect, family/young person conflict, a child absent from school. Forced marriage may involve the child being taken out of the country for the ceremony and so staff should be alerted to any requests for holiday or extended absence during term time.

Any information or concern that a child is at immediate risk of or has undergone FGM or forced marriage should result in a child protection referral under school procedures to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the first instance and then to Children's Social Care Services and/or the Child Protection Team, West Midlands Police Service. Staff should be alert to the need to act quickly. Consideration should be given to establish, if there are also risks to any younger sisters.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them.

The target level of attendance for this school is 96.7% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress and how your child's attendance compares. Our aim is to achieve better than this, because we know that good attendance is the key to your child reaching their full academic potential.

We monitor whole school attendance and punctuality on a regular basis, to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives the school undertakes will be provided in our newsletters and on the parent noticeboard.

Incentives for attendance for 2019 / 2020

Weekly class rewards – treat for any class with 100% attendance

Weekly individual rewards – a gift token to be presented to one pupil in both lower and upper school, who has 100% attendance for the week. Pupils with 100% attendance are entered into a prize draw and 2 pupils chosen randomly.

Half termly reward – a variety of treats will be awarded to the 'most improved' class for the half term. Again, a class in both lower and upper school will be rewarded.

Individual termly attendance certificates – bronze - 97%, silver - 98%, gold - 99% and special - 100% are given to pupils. Badges for 100% attendance are also given out to pupils throughout the year.

Termly rewards and special initiatives are set up throughout the year, where treats are given either in school or where pupils are taken out on a trip, for example: circus workshop, cinema visit, ice cream parlour and animal man.

Staff responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs E Shaw	Deputy Head Teacher
Mrs N Stewart	Education Welfare Officer
Mrs J Moulder	Inclusion Manager
Mrs R Scattergood	Senior School Administrator
Mrs L Woodhall	Pastoral Worker
Mrs T Millard	Safeguarding Manager
Miss A Goode	Chair of Governors / Attendance Governor

Please note that all teaching and support staff are trained and refreshed annually relating to their roles in promoting attendance.

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend and arrive punctually.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils in order to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.