



Marlborough Primary Academy

Attendance Policy

Autumn 2020

We expect all pupils on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the pupils to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards the school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all pupils. We will also make the best provision we can for those student/pupils who, due to ill health, are prevented from attending.

Aims, understanding and principles of good attendance

- To support school to maximise the achievement of all pupils.
- There is a clear link between good attendance and educational achievement.
- Regular and punctual attendance is vital if pupils are to benefit fully from academic, personal and social opportunities, which are offered to them within the school.
- Parents/carers play an important role in supporting the school and encouraging pupils to reach good attendance levels.
- A broad and balanced education is dependent on regular attendance at school.
- School will take appropriate action to promote good attendance and understanding that non-school attendance is a safeguarding issue.

What the school expects of its pupils:

- To attend regularly.
- To arrive on time, appropriately prepared for the day and ensure they arrive promptly to each individual lesson.
- To hand any letters regarding absence from parents to the Class Teacher.

What the school expects of parents/carers

- To fulfil their parental responsibility by ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time. Parents/carers should be aware it is their responsibility in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient full time education suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.
- To ensure that they contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend (within the first half hour of the start of the school day).
- To ensure their child arrives on time and is well prepared for the school day with equipment, completed homework etc.
- To avoid medical appointments during the school day unless absolutely necessary and to collect from and return pupils to school whenever an appointment is unavoidable during the school day.
- To contact the school whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- To inform the Class Teacher and seek authorisation from the appropriate person within the school for any forthcoming appointments and, where possible, arrange appointments outside of the school day.
- To ensure the continuity of their child's education by taking holidays during the school holiday period.
- Work in partnership with school to take an active interest in their child's school career, to reinforce school policies/arrangements on homework, behaviour and approach to learning, to attend parent consultation evenings and other meetings where necessary.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies (as and when appropriate) to resolve issues relating to non-attendance.

What parents/carers and pupils can expect of the school

- To maximise attendance rates as one of their key tasks, with clear procedures to identify and follow up absence and provide a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- Inform and involve Governors.
- To nominate a member of the senior management team to be the Attendance Lead for the school.
- Identify a range of strategies to deal with absenteeism and punctuality.
- Support parents in ensuring regular and punctual attendance.

- To respond promptly to any issue which may lead to non, or irregular school attendance.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the individual parent/carer. This will be reflected in the ways in which attendance issues are addressed, eg school should recognise that some parents/carers have difficulty understanding written communications. (School will also recognise the reluctance of some parents/carers to come into school).
- Be alert to critical times – eg return to school after a period of long term sickness, a return after a traumatic event (either at home or school) or during the period leading to a phased transfer.
- Produce whole school Attendance Policies and Procedures which are consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parents/carers.
- To provide a broad and balanced education which is motivational and relevant to all students, and is dependent on regular attendance at school.
- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance and basic analysis of attendance data will be undertaken regularly.
- First day contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing a valid reason.
- Prompt action on any problems identified.
- Close liaison with the Education Welfare Service and other services and agencies to assist and support parents/carers and pupils where needed.
- Notification to parents/carers of their child's attendance record through an annual report home and regular updates throughout the academic year.
- All staff will maintain high expectations in relation to attendance, all pupils will be made aware that their presence is compulsory and that their absence is noted.
- Systems of reward for attendance as well as achievement and sympathetic reintegration strategies for long-term absentees.
- Provide effective primary/secondary liaison.
- Referral to the Education Welfare Service where school intervention has failed to secure an improvement in attendance. Schools will always refer to Education Welfare Service where a child is a Persistent Absentee pupil and there are no acknowledged reasons for absence by the school. Discussions with Education Welfare Service may start at 90 per cent, 8 unauthorised sessions or 4 days absence with no contact.

What the school, parents/carers and pupils can expect of the Education Welfare Service

- The Education Welfare Service has a key function in working closely with schools, families, teams within the LA and other services and agencies, both statutory and voluntary. The Education Welfare Service aims to promote excellent levels of attendance and punctuality at school or otherwise, thereby contributing to raising pupil attainment.
- To work within a legal framework, through the DfE and discharge its duties with regard to ensuring that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving a suitable education

by regular school attendance. In doing so it enables schools and parents/carers to meet their respective responsibilities.

- To support school to fulfil their legal responsibilities with regard to pupil attendance.
- To provide a sample Attendance Policy to schools.
- To support and challenge schools in respect of data analysis, registering of pupils and marking of registers including authorising absence, persistent absence, early intervention and monitoring.
- To undertake register inspections on a termly basis as a minimum. The admission register and the attendance register of every school must be available for inspection during school hours by:
 - Any of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools appointed under Section 1(2) and 5(2) the Education (Schools) Act 2005(b);
 - Any Inspector registered under Section 2(1) Schedule 1 of that Act; and
 - In the case of a school maintained by a Local Authority, any officer of the Local Authority authorised for that purpose (Education Welfare Officer).
- Promote partnership working between the Local Authority, schools, parents/carers and other services and agencies by offering guidance, support and assistance in this area.
- Assist schools in creating a framework which promotes consistent practices and procedures.
- The Local Authority will work to overcome any language/interpretation/understanding barriers and work with schools and other agencies/services/individuals to assist in overcoming any barriers that may be presented by the pupil or their family in order to ensure the pupil receives the education to which they are entitled.
- Provide training/information to staff/pupils/Governors on attendance issues as and when required.

The role of the school's Governing Body

The Governing Body of each school is expected to set an attendance target for the school on an annual basis. It should be equal to or exceed the previous year's target. Attendance will be a regular item at Governor's meetings.

Statutory Framework

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil. The Local Authority will use the 1996 Education Act and the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (penalty notices) in order to fulfil its duties in ensuring regular school attendance. Section 23 of the Anti-social behaviour Act gives powers to the Local authority to issue penalty notices where a parent/carer is considered capable of, but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance. These powers came into force on 27 February 2004. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent/carer

does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised. A parent/carer may be required to provide evidence to support absences due to illness or other reason.

Registration

Schools are required to take an attendance register at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Registration 1991 and the Education (Pupils Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 stipulate that schools should maintain an attendance register for each class containing the names of all pupils in the class.

Taking the register is a key part of the school day and should be seen as such by all staff, pupils and parents/carers.

School session times vary from school to school. The school session times for this school are **8:45am** until **12:00pm (F2/KS1)** **12.15pm (KS2)** & **1:00pm** until **3.00pm (EYFS/KS1)** **3:00pm (KS2)**. The school register is a legal document and may be required as evidence in court. It must be completed fully twice daily. On each occasion schools must record whether every pupil was present, absent, present at approved educational activities or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Registration will take place **five minutes** after the start of the session. Parents/carers are expected to ensure their child is in school at least five minutes prior to the start of session time in order that registration can take place and their child does not receive a late mark.

Registration will close **9:15am** after the start of the session. Once registration has taken place/has closed the following procedures apply: if a pupil arrives late and the register is still open, they should be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session (**late defined as coming into school via the main door – having missed normal entry into school**), pupil to sign into the late book as they arrive.

If a pupil arrives after the close of registration and provides a satisfactory explanation from the parent/carer, they will be marked as authorised absent for that session, eg medical appointment - 'M'.

If a pupil arrives after the close of registration and fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, they will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' – 'U' for that session.

Pupils who arrive late after the school start times, should report first to the main office, where a record will be made of the time the pupil arrives. The register entry will then be amended in accordance with the details above. The school will accurately record the arrival time of each pupil in a late book.

All teachers must take registers in their classroom at the appropriate times and will notify the school office immediately of any absenteeism/late attendance.

Inspection of the registers will take place regularly by both school assigned staff and the Education Welfare Service to ensure correct procedures are followed, accurate marking of registers and appropriate monitoring of attendance takes place.

Accurate tracking of late arrival to school will take place. Pupils may be expected to make up lost time within school. Parent/carers will always be informed in writing of the school

concerns over late arrival and action taken by the school to intervene with parent/carers to ensure the pattern of late attendance does not continue.

Where pupils continue with patterns of unauthorised late attendance despite intervention by the school, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service for investigation into the circumstances of the late attendance. Appropriate sanctions such as penalty notices/prosecutions will be enforced where necessary, after appropriate casework intervention where there has been little or no improvement.

Grounds for deleting registered pupils from school admission registers are detailed in Keeping Pupil Registers – **(Held in Attendance File in Office)**.

Authorised/unauthorised absence

It is vital that all staff within the school adhere to the same criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence. Absences should be recorded in accordance with the Attendance Codes **(Held in Attendance File in Office)** issued by the DfE.

Examples of when absence may be **authorised**:

- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents and the conditions stated in the Education Act 1966 Section 444(6) are met.
- A absence in term time where special/exceptional circumstances are given at the time of application.
- The pupil is excluded from school and appropriate information and paperwork have been forwarded to the parent.

Note: The absence of pupils taking part in appropriately supervised educational activities outside the school is recorded as 'approved educational activities' as appropriate. This is equivalent to 'present' for performance table purposes.

Any pupil who does not attend a provision off-site and is not attending school has to be marked as absent in the school register.

Examples of when absence should be unauthorised

- No explanation is forthcoming within an acceptable time limit (ie 2 weeks).
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- The parent has been advised that absences will not be authorised without appropriate medical confirmation.
- The pupil stays at home to mind the house or look after siblings.
- The pupil is shopping during school hours.

- The pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (eg a birthday).
- The pupil is absent from school for the purpose of an unauthorised holiday.
- The pupil is absent from school due to not returning to school from an authorised holiday at the given date.

Any absence taken without the permission of the Headteacher/Principal will be recorded as unauthorised absence in the school register, which is a **legal document**.

It is for the Head teacher/Principal and **not** the parent to make decision as to whether the absence should be authorised.

It is the parent's responsibility to provide all evidence of absence and bear any costs that this may incur.

Absence in Term Time

What the Law says

Regulations make it clear that a Headteacher/Principal may not authorise an absence in term time for the purpose of a family holiday. This was brought about by an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, which has removed references to holidays and the 10-day period. The amendments make it clear that a Headteacher/Principal may not grant leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If a holiday is taken without the school's permission, this should be recorded as unauthorised absence and noted on the child's records. If a child has not returned within 20 days of the first day of absence, then the school may take the child off roll, after consultation with your named Education Welfare Officer.

Schools will only consider requests from that parent and absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

<p>Other absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Genuine illness ● Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible) ● Days of religious observance ● Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement ● Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces ● External examinations ● When Traveller children go on the road with their parents where the school is informed beforehand 	<p>Other absence from school will not be authorised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For any type of shopping ● Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents ● Minding the house ● Birthdays ● Resting after a late night ● Relatives visiting or visiting relatives ● Because holidays are cheaper in term time ● More than one day for a family wedding.
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Penalty Notices

If a pupil's attendance continues to be an issue, or parents have taken pupils on term time holidays when permission has not been granted, or a pupil has 8 unauthorised absences schools can consider a variety of initiatives, one of which may be a Penalty Notice.

The Penalty Notice fine is £60 per child per adult if paid within 28 days or £120 per child per adult if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. If a Penalty Notice is not paid, there may be a prosecution in Court.

Procedures for following up absence

Absences should be explained by parents to the school on the first day of absence prior to 9.30am. Notes, letters and telephone messages should be retained by the school with dates and times if appropriate to ensure evidence is available for recording purposes and any legal intervention taken by the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service. All verbal conversations should be recorded with date, time and names of staff and parents involved for the same reason.

To ensure the safety of children, where parents have not contacted the school prior to 9.30am, the school will operate its first day contact procedures and telephone parents to ascertain the reason for absence. If contact cannot be obtained, a letter will be sent by first class post on the same day (or no later than the third day), requesting contact be made with the school and reason given. Where there are concerns as to the safety or welfare of a child, the school will endeavour to contact parents via an immediate home visit. This may be done in conjunction with Education Welfare Service, Children's Social Care, Health or the Police where appropriate.

Failure to respond within five days to absence telephone calls, letters or home visits will result in an immediate referral to the Education Welfare Service for investigation.

Where possible, parents should confirm in writing the reason for absence from school.

If a pupil is persistently absent or late after register has closed and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have proved unsuccessful, a referral will be placed with the Education Welfare Service for investigation and legal intervention if necessary. This may include a full prosecution, penalty notice or Education Supervision Order. Parents are informed of this in the School Information Handbook and Local Authority leaflets sent to parents on a regular basis.

Prior to referral to Education Welfare Service, schools will have contacted parents in writing of their concerns and attempted at least one appointment in school with the parents to discuss these concerns. Parents will be advised that the school will no longer authorise absences without appropriate evidence, until there is an acceptable improvement in attendance and that a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service. Registration certificates will show unauthorised absences when referred to Education Welfare Service – 'O'.

Children missing from education or who may otherwise be at risk

Schools will follow the procedures set out in the Children Missing from Education Policy and Procedures as agreed by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. It is important that parents/carers inform the school if they move house/area etc, giving full details of any new address and the proposed school. The Education Welfare Service will follow up all pupils who are believed to have left the area. The school and the Education Welfare Service will make 'reasonable' enquiries to locate the pupil. No pupil should be deleted from the school roll until the Education Welfare Service has agreed this.

Truancy sweeps

The Education Welfare Service and the police undertake truancy sweeps a number of times throughout the year and often in conjunction with other services and agencies. Any pupils found during the school day will normally be returned to the school and parents will be notified. Evidence from truancy sweeps may be used in prosecutions.

Strategies for promoting attendance

- The school will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcome. The school's ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will always be taken. Early intervention is often the key to preventing more frequent absences.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to pupils. Every effort is made to ensure that learning tasks match pupil's needs.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement and support and inform policy/practice.
- Good attendance will be praised appropriately.
- Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, the school brochure, parents' evening, etc) of the importance of good attendance.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be reintegrated back into school upon their return.
- Pupils who have been absent for whatever reason for an extended period of time will (when appropriate) have individually tailored reintegration programmes prepared for them.
- The Attendance Lead will have regular meetings with the Education Welfare Officer in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- School will regularly analyse their data so that early identification can be made of pupil's absence and especially those who are persistent absentees (or in danger of becoming a persistent absentee – PA). A pupil is considered to be a PA pupil if their attendance falls below 85%.
- Good attendance will be promoted with children through attendance awards made termly and annually to pupils with 100% attendance in assembly and class and those with the greatest improvement in attendance.
- Consider target setting for individual form groups, pupils etc.

Safeguarding

School attendance is a safeguarding issue – see School Safeguarding Policy. It is therefore vital that all registers must be marked correctly and up to date.

The school Pupil Attendance Policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless required earlier.

Review due on or before Autumn 2020

Addendum to Attendance Policy Autumn 2020

New for 2020 to 2021 – not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

To make sure schools record this accurately and consistently, we have made changes to the regulations² governing school attendance registers to add a new category of non-attendance – ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’.

This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)³
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State’s expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

Attendance codes

From the beginning of the new academic year, schools should return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak (set out on page 9 of the [attendance guidance](#)), in addition to the new category of ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’:

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ should be recorded using code X⁴
- schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak

Examples in which ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ could apply

In line with current legislation, and current guidance from PHE and DHSC, examples are as follows.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

View [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).

Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test.

If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I – illness, as would usually be the case. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.

If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

If someone in the pupil’s household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.

If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.

If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. Code X should be used during this period.

In all cases of self-isolation, schools should ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. Schools should not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

View [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#) and [NHS test and trace](#) guidance.

Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19).

The [NHS test and trace](#) guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). In the event of a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious. Code X should be used for these pupils during this period.

Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine

View guidance on [how to self-isolate when you travel to the UK](#).

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine⁵. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register.

Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only

View [guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons from Covid-19](#).

Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

If in future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high. Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents will be able to share with the school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from PHE or the DHSC should be recorded as code X.

Schools should contact parents of pupils who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school. Code X should not be used for sessions after the pupil has been advised to return to school.

Local lockdown

If rates of the disease rise locally, schools may need to prevent some pupils from attending. Schools should follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown. Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' - code X - should be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.

Remote education

If a pupil is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

Data collection

Collection of school attendance data as part of the school census will resume in January 2021, collecting data for the autumn term 2020. Subject to the necessary legislation being made, from January 2021, the census will collect attendance codes in addition to absence codes.

Further information will follow on what, if any, additional attendance data will be required during the 2020 to 2021 academic year to monitor the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) and support the government's planning.

1. [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Coronavirus\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 2\) Regulations 2020](#) ↩
2. [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Coronavirus\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 2\) Regulations 2020](#) ↩
3. And their equivalents in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland if a pupil attending a school in England resides there. ↩
4. Code X is not counted as an absence in the school census. ↩
5. [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#) ↩