



# Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

Issued: September 2020  
Review: Term 1 annually  
LST: TGI/MAM

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Aims of the policy:

- To outline the processes and procedures that support excellent attendance
- To support all pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- Enable all pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through schools;
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

### Being at school

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all pupils have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer.

All schools encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

### Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually.
- Discuss promptly with the pastoral team/class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their child's school attendance.

**Good attendance** is recognised through positive comments from teachers, support staff, tutors and certificates are awarded etc. See [APPENDIX 1](#) for schools that have individual reward systems to promote good attendance.

### Daily Procedures for reporting absence:

Parents & carers need to report absence daily via telephone or in person. This ensures that schools can fulfil their requirements to monitor attendance and safeguard children.

### Daily Procedures for monitoring attendance:

Registers and monitoring of attendance is the responsibility of the tutors/classroom teachers in the first instance. Tutors/classroom teachers will ask pupils for letters explaining absence, look for patterns of absence or poor attendance. In addition, they will comment on regular good attendance. If tutors/class teachers have problems in obtaining letters

authorising absences or are concerned about any aspect of attendance, the pastoral team (secondary)/senior staff (primary and special) should be notified and will make contact with the parents.

If a pupil is absent without any contact from parents the pastoral team/classroom teacher/or most senior member of staff on site, should try and make contact with the parent.

In our primary schools some of the procedures may vary, but the principle of ensuring the best possible attendance remains, as does the meticulous tracking and following up of absence.

### **Registers, Punctuality and Lateness:**

Punctuality when attending school is crucial. Lateness causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is really important therefore that all pupils arrive at their school on time. Parents/Carers who do not ensure their child is on time, are in breach of the Education act 1996 section 444 (1)

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.
- Registers close at approximately 9.30am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the Local Authority.
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with through a letter home to parents and a meeting with the pastoral team/class teacher or a senior member of staff. It may be necessary to refer the issue to the Education Welfare Service.
- A pupil's attendance is recorded on their report or can be accessed by school portals. Attendance records are routinely passed to future schools or colleges as is necessary.

### **Pupils Leaving During the School Day**

The school staff must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return and parents must be present so that the office staff can check children are leaving with an adult. In secondary schools, a telephone conversation with a parent/carer is sufficient to allow permission for a child to leave the site, but only in exceptional or certain circumstances – illness, death of a family member, etc. **Schools will refuse to allow pupils to leave if they are concerned about their safety.**
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. **Should the school be unable to make contact with the family then the school will contact the Police and register the children as a missing person.**

### **Regular attendance reviews**

There are regular meetings between pastoral team members/senior staff in primary and senior member of staff responsible for attendance to review attendance patterns. These meetings are to review attendance and any agency interventions required. In addition, actions that need to be taken including referrals to EWO or other agencies and Medical Action Plans are discussed. The following groups of students are reviewed at those meetings:

- pupils referred to the EWO;
- pupils with attendance under 90% (Persistent Absentees);
- pupils with attendance under 96%;
- pupils of "at risk" groups eg. ethnic minorities, SEN, CLA, FSM, Other PP;
- school refusers;
- students that need other measure to monitor and improve attendance.

In secondary schools, fortnightly meetings are also held with the EWO and the Senior Pastoral Lead to review caseload and plan additional interventions.

In primary and special school provision the EWO will meet regularly with senior staff to discuss issues and take appropriate action.

### **Action taken following reviews**

From the end of term, if a child's attendance falls below 96%, the school will contact parents by letter to highlight the importance of good attendance and that their child's attendance has fallen below the school target.

Where attendance is a cause for concern, usually when attendance falls below 96%, the pastoral team/senior staff will liaise with the tutor/classroom teacher.

The following actions will be taken in accordance with the review procedures;

- contact made with parents, usually by letter;
- if there has been no improvement, a second letter is sent informing parents that further absences will not be authorised unless supported with evidence;
- if there is no improvement or still cause for concern, a further letter / contact is made inviting parents in to meet with Pastoral Team/Classroom Teacher as appropriate;
- if there is still no improvement or still cause for concern, either a further meeting will be held or a referral made to the EWO. Parents will be notified of a referral;
- possible request for information from the GP, school doctor or school nurse;
- referral to outside agencies if appropriate;
- legal action including issuing of penalty notice requests.

### **Additional support that may be used:**

- school nurse;
- Behaviour support therapy
- mentoring particularly with Pastoral Team/Classroom Teacher;
- referral to outside agencies e.g. psychologist, CAHMS, Social services, Compass, Parents Support, reintegration support, careers advisors, Youth Connect, CMES, Behaviour Panel, GP.

### **Absence during term time:**

Absence during term time will not be authorised unless there are **very** exceptional circumstances and never at the following times:

- KS1 & KS2 SATS assessments;
- beginning of KS3 as pupils find it difficult to settle;
- Year 9 Assessments;
- KS4 due to examination preparations;
- if the pupil should be taking external examinations including GCSE module examinations;
- if attendance is under 96%;
- if there would be more than 10 days absence in any academic year.

If absences are not authorised, and they are still taken, the matter will be referred to the Children Missing Education Service and a penalty notice requested. If unauthorised holiday is taken, no further absences will be authorised without medical evidence.

Further details of this (including costs) are included on the Penalty Notice Parents Information sent by schools or at the end of this policy.

**Procedures:** A Leave of Absence Form can be collected from the main school offices. This should be completed by the parents/carers and passed to the pastoral team/classroom teacher at least two weeks ahead of the absence. The pastoral team/classroom teacher will review the attendance and pass to the Headteacher with regard to formal authorisation. If the absence is authorised this will be marked in the register and a letter will be sent to that effect.

If the absence is not authorised the parent will be notified in writing by post or email.

The Headteacher, will be responsible for overseeing any Penalty Notice Request.

### **Additional Notes:**

- tutors/classroom teachers are to have print outs of pupils in their groups under 90% attendance and who need monitoring;
- pastoral team/senior staff are to have print outs of the pupils who are under 90% attendance - with notes;
- pastoral team/classroom teacher will have a file with the details of any pupil with under 96% attendance including action taken. Senior staff will oversee this to ensure consistency across the school;

- the pastoral team/classroom teacher need to know which pupils require monitoring;
- if a child is absent and the parent/carer has not made contact with the school, the pastoral team/classroom teacher/receptionist will telephone home;
- where there are concerns about poor attendance, a report to be completed with relevant information about action taken;
- there will be an annual report on attendance broken down by categories: girls, boys, years, ethnic origin, looked after pupils, SEN, FSM. There will be a central copy of this report.
- There will be regular updates on attendance to the Local Governing Body and Trust Board.

**The Local Authority Children Missing Education Service (CMES):**

- the CMES will be given details of pupils causing concern through poor attendance;
- the CMES will be informed of any exclusions;
- the advice of the CMES will be sought with “stuck cases”, possibly to involve external support;
- the CMES may be invited to medical action plan and school attendance meetings;
- formal referrals will be made to the CMES when attendance drops below 90% or 20 absences, or when there are extensive unauthorised absences;
- CMES may attend review meetings held with lower attendees in KS4.

**The legal framework within which we operate this policy**

**The Legal Framework Governing Attendance**

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually in order to optimise their learning, achieve the best they can and get the most out of their educational experience. Failure to do so is an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

**Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:**

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs, he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Section 444 further states that: “The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law.” An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

- The student was absent with leave (authorised absence)
- The student was ill or prevented from attending by unavoidable cause
- The absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student/parent belongs

Failure to comply may lead to prosecution in the Magistrates Court where on conviction each parent would be liable to a fine up to £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

The Act also places a legal obligation on:

- The LA to provide and enforce attendance
- Schools to register attendance and notify the LA (or the CMES) of a child’s absence from school without authorisation of 10 or more days.
- The governing body to make sure that school registers are kept, one for attendance and one for admissions.

**Attendance codes**

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (am)	Present
\	Present (pm)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity

C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised Absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised Absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised Absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc appointments)	Authorised Absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/ Dental appointments	Authorised Absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised Absence
P	Approved Sporting Activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work Experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence Temporary code for Covid-19 related absence)	Not counted in possible attendances Access to remote education
Y	Exceptional Circumstances – such as whole school closure – to be used at the Headteacher’s Discretion	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to students	Not counted in possible attendances

The key consideration in the use of codes J, P, V, W and B is that:

- they are of an educational nature, directly linked to the schools programme;
- they are approved by the school;
- they are supervised either by a member of staff or another individual authorised by the school.

Some schools in the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership have different reward systems in place for promoting and rewarding high attendance.

### Beechen Cliff Secondary School



Praise and rewards have an important part to play in motivation pupils/students to achieve and maintain good or improved levels of attendance.

These rewards operate:

1. On an individual basis
2. On a Tutor Group basis
3. On a Year basis
4. Whole school

Categories to be rewarded:

- |                         |      |
|-------------------------|------|
| 1. Excellent attendance | 100% |
| 2. Good attendance      | 98%  |

Tutors, Deputy Heads of Houses and Heads of Houses can send individual letters home praising good attendance. This process will be co-ordinated by Deputy Heads of House.

### Critchill School



### Dundry, Shoscombe and St Julian's

At the end of each term every child with 100% attendance will be celebrated in the newsletter and given a certificate. At the end of the year the children with 100% attendance are celebrated in the Awards Assembly and presented with a medal and certificate. Children with 99% attendance will gain a 'special mention'.



### Longvernal Primary School

- Autumn term – Medal and certificate for 100% attendance, awarded at celebration assembly
- Spring term – Medal and certificate for 100% attendance, awarded at celebration assembly
- Summer term – Medal, certificate and trophy for 100% attendance for whole year, awarded at celebration assembly



### Midsomer Norton Primary School

- The 3 classes with the best attendance will be celebrated in our weekly celebration assembly and in our weekly newsletter
- At the end of each term there is a special reward for children who have achieved attendance at 100% for that term
- Children with 97%+ attendance, receive a special attendance certificate, signed by the Head Teacher to take home and keep. Certificates are presented each half term, to reward those who achieve excellent attendance.



- Only pupils achieving 100% attendance and 6 lates or fewer for the whole school year, are eligible for the end of year reward.
- Pupils are informed on a weekly basis of attendance/punctuality achievements. The class achieving the highest attendance/punctuality, and the number of pupils achieving 97% -100% attendance are shared in termly assemblies.

## Hayesfield Girls' School



### Rewards and Incentives

The school's reward system recognises students' achievement of regular and punctual attendance.

- Rewards that will be used are:
  - } Recognition by tutor
  - } Letters home to parents
  - } Punctuality and Attendance Certificates, distributed in Achievement Assemblies
  - } 'All Day Every Day' badges and certificates for students with consistently high attendance
- Students with 100% attendance for the term receive a letter of congratulations
- Students with 100% attendance for the academic year have a 100% Attendance Certificate presented at their end of year celebration assembly. Gift tokens may also be awarded, if finance is available.
- Students who have achieved targets set at Attendance Panels may receive appropriate rewards
- Students in receipt of the Pupil Premium with an attendance of 97% for the term receive a letter of congratulations and have an Excellent Attendance Certificate presented at their end of year celebration assembly.

## Norton Hill



- 100% attendance for terms 1& 2; terms 3 & 4 and terms 5 & 6.
- 99% attendance for the year.
- 100% attendance for the year which are awarded at celebration assemblies.
- Parent's whose Child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence will receive a FPN warning letter. Any further unauthorised absences will result in a FPN.
- Tutor groups with the highest level of attendance at the end of the academic year will be rewarded a non-uniform day.

In monitoring of attendance at Norton Hill School parents/carers will be sent a letter notifying them when their child's attendance is below 96%.

Parents/Carers of pupils below 94% will receive a persistent absentee information letter and the guidance the school follows in relation to persistent absentees.

Parents/Carers of pupils whose attendance does not improve after the initial letter will be invited to meet with Pastoral staff to complete an action plan to improve attendance.

Parents/Carers of pupils whose attendance is a concern (below 90%) will be referred to the EWO.

## Somervale School



- A non-uniform day for 100% attendance in each term;
- 99% attendance for the year;
- 100% attendance for the year which are awarded at the annual celebration evening.

Please note that Somervale School are currently piloting a slightly different process for their regular reviews of attendance as follows;

- From April 2017- 94% letters will be sent to parents agreed with HOKS to address concerns.
- Warning letter re: Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) will be issued after 5 sessions and FPN issued at 10 sessions of unauthorised absence.

## St Dunstan's and Park Road Support Centre



- A non-uniform day for 100% attendance in each term.
- 99-100% letter from Headteacher and certificate.
- 100% attendance for the year which are awarded at the annual celebration evening.

## St Mark's Secondary School



### At St Mark's School we like to celebrate achievement.

Our Rewards System is based on House Points. Students have the opportunity to earn House Points in numerous ways. House Points are then put into a Prize Draw and the student has an opportunity to win a substantial prize.

- Students with 100% attendance for the year receive a certificate and 10 house points and are invited to attend our Rewards Evening.
- For every week a student has 100% attendance, they automatically receive 2 house points.
- Every week Tutors are sent Attendance data for their tutees. Students are awarded with stickers and House Points if their attendance stays at 100% or increases from the week before. If the attendance drops then Tutors will enquire why and see if any support is needed.
- Every Term, if a student's attendance falls between 97 – 100%, they are rewarded with a Certificate and 5 House Points.

After consultation with the School Council, we have decided that a mufti day each half term is one way to show our recognition of their efforts. This will be done in Term 3 on a trial basis.

## St Mary's Primary School



### 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 focus on this we will:

- give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report
- notify parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below 92%

## Westfield Primary School



### Rewards

The Class with the best attendance is celebrated in our weekly celebration assembly and published in our weekly newsletter. The class then holds the attendance trophy for a week.

At the end of the Autumn term there is a special reward for children who have achieved attendance of 100% and they receive a certificate signed by the Headteacher.

At the end of the Summer term there is a special reward for children who have achieved 100% attendance for the whole school year, including a signed certificate and enamel badge.

Children with individual attendance problems are often specifically targeted with personalised sign in / sticker chart incentives.





## Writhlington and Mendip Studio School

### Rewards

- 100% attendance certificate and letter home for terms 1&2, terms 3&4 and terms 5&6.
- 100% attendance certificate for the year at celebration assemblies.
- 99/100% attendance letter home at the end of the year.
- Year group competition - tutor groups with highest attendance weekly and termly will receive Progress Leader rewards e.g. - mufti day or sports activity.
- Year group competition - Year group with the highest attendance at the end of the year rewarded with mufti day or a specifically targeted activity.