



Whole School Attendance Policy

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Moat Farm Infant and Nursery School

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND GUIDELINES

1. Introduction

Regular school attendance for all children is essential to ensure continuity and progression in their education and for children to achieve their full potential at Moat Farm Infant School. Children with poor attendance tend to do less well compared to their peers with good attendance at school.

Moat Farm Infant School (hereafter, referred to as 'School') believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent children who are able to achieve their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Our school values all children, and we aim to provide a welcoming, nurturing and caring environment where children want to be and are keen to do well. It is school's responsibility to monitor and actively pursue the goal of regular attendance. The law states all parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their children attend the school their child is registered at regularly and arrive on time. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. We recognise that attendance is everybody's business thus is a matter for the whole school community.

The Government's recommendation is for children to attend for 96% of the school year. It is important that school and home become partners to benefit the child. This policy applies to **all children** at Moat Farm Infant and Nursery School; however, we do recognise that some children will be below the statutory school age of 5 years. We at Moat Farm Infant and Nursery school expect excellent attendance and believe it should be promoted from the very start of a child's schooling.

At Moat Farm Infant School, we are continuously working towards the goal of a minimum of 96% attendance for all children. Attendance below 90% is classed as persistent absenteeism (PA) and is a cause for concern.

The school times for Reception and Key Stage one are 8.30am – 3.10pm. School doors open early at 8.30am in the morning and are closed at 8:50am. Registers are taken at 8.50am and registers close at 9.20am.

This policy has been reviewed in line with new guidance from the DFE guidance for schools:

- [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)
- [School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/school-behaviour-and-attendance-parental-responsibility-measures)

2. Registration

The Education (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again at the start of the afternoon session. On each occasion school should record whether ever child is:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity eg school trip
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Electronic Registers (on SIMs) are marked in class at the start of the morning (8.50am) and afternoon (12.20pm/1pm /1.30pm) sessions and are closed morning at 9:20 am and afternoon at 1.30pm. Teachers will mark children as either:

/\ **Present** – child in school am & pm
N **Absent**

The admin and attendance team will then update the registers with the coding dependent on the reason given to school for the child's absence.

Register Codings

If a child is absent the following codes must be used to record the reason for the absence. These codes must be applied consistently throughout the school.

I Illness – parent has informed school that child is ill (parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences for illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription or doctor's note). School may record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied by the reason for the absence, and advise parents of this.

C Other authorised circumstances – This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package. Parents may be asked to complete a leave of absence form so school can consider the specific facts and circumstances of the absence.

O Unauthorised circumstances – no information received from parents or the reason provided by parents is not accepted as a justifiable reason for absence from school eg child/family members' birthday, shopping trip, haircut, closure of sibling's school for INSET day, couldn't get up, illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school.

L Late before register closed – child arrives late but before 9.20am

U Late after register closed – registers close at 9.20am and 1.30pm. Any child *arriving after these times* will be recorded an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory reason is given for the late arrival eg medical appointment.

M Medical/dental appointments– Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, children should attend school for part of the day and only be missing from school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. Parents will be asked to show the appointment card or letter to school.

E Excluded – child has been excluded from school – you will be informed by the head teacher

V Educational visit – e.g. trips, residential (Edgmond Hall)

H Authorised holiday – appropriate form has been completed and absence has been authorised by Head Teacher (evidence of exceptional circumstances has been supplied)

G Unauthorised holiday - child is on a family holiday and the appropriate form has been completed but the leave is not authorised.

R Religious observance – special leave of absence on the day set apart exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.

Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – the school site or part of it is closed due to adverse weather conditions or an unavoidable cause.

planned whole school or partial school closure – teacher training days and school holidays or school used as polling station.

Please note that any absence (authorised or unauthorised) goes against a child's attendance percentage. Any concerns about a child's attendance or punctuality must be reported to the Attendance Lead, Mrs Davis. Individual attendance figures will be reviewed regularly. Parents will be informed by letter if their child's attendance falls below 90% and it will then be monitored more closely. School will work with families to remove attendance barriers and seek support for improving attendance.

3. Categorising Absence

Registers are taken twice a day in school, and every half day absent has to be recorded by school as authorised or unauthorised. Where children are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the child's absence has been received.

It is the parent's responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible on the first day of absence. The absence is authorised only when the school is satisfied with the explanation and it is a valid reason for absence. School may conduct a safe and well check if there are concerns regarding the reason for the absence. Parents should advise the school by telephone, before 9.30am, each day of their child's absence and provide the school with an expected date of return.

The parent should contact the school by:-

- Telephone by 9.30 am, (this is recorded and entered onto the system by Office Staff)
- Letter/note to class teacher
- Email to Mrs Davis – Jayne.davis@mfi.school

Once the absence has been authorised, the appropriate coding, will be entered on the register. It is expected that all reasonable attempts will be made to discover the reason for any absence. It is important to note that any absence, whether authorised or unauthorised, will count against a child's overall percentage.

We also remind parents to make routine appointments (dentist, optician etc) outside the school day. We will need to see appointment cards for school time appointments. If the child has a school time appointment we need to remind parents we would appreciate them bringing their child to school before and after the appointment time wherever possible.

4. Unauthorised Absence

Where no explanation is given for a child's absence or if the school does not accept the explanation given, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

The class teacher, attendance lead and Head teacher have a duty to monitor each child's unauthorised absences.

If your child is absent and we have not had any contact from parents to report the absence, the school office will contact you on the first day of absence. If there is continuing absence without any explanation, school may conduct a safe and well check (home visit). This will be carried out by two members of staff. We may also call the other contacts who you have listed on your information form at the beginning of the year to ascertain the reason your child is absent from school.

5. Monitoring Attendance

It is important that the class teacher, attendance lead and the Head teacher monitor attendance and where necessary, involve Sandwell School's Attendance Support Service. The following monitoring arrangements will be followed:

- (i) To ensure every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- (ii) To encourage regular, punctual attendance by all children and to identify reasons and causes of persistent absence and/or lateness with individual children and their families and work to address these with a collaborative approach.
- (iii) Carry out First Day Calling (FDC) when a child is absent from school and no reason has been received.
- (iv) If parents are unable to be contacted and all other contacts have been tried, then a Marvellous Me message may be sent to parents requesting contact is made with school.
- (v) A home visit may be undertaken if no reason for a child's absence has been given to school/or school are concerned about a child's attendance.
- (vi) Any member of staff concerned about a child's attendance should report their concerns to the attendance lead, who will take the appropriate action.

- (vii) The attendance team will regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils and families that require support to improve attendance
- (viii) Parents of children whose attendance falls below 90% will be sent a letter pointing out their child's attendance.
- (ix) Parents of children whose attendance falls below 90% or whose attendance has not improved since previous monitoring will then be either contacted by phone or invited by letter to discuss any attendance barriers and look at strategies for improvement.
- (x) Where there are attendance concerns about a child, parents will be asked to provide medical evidence to support further illness absences or they will not be authorised.
- (xi) The School Attendance Support Service may become involved where there is irregular attendance and a referral has been made by school for support.
- (xii) If, following monitoring procedures, attendance improves; a letter will be sent to notify parents of this.
- (xiii) In the school's newsletter school will share class and whole school attendance so parents are informed about the school's attendance record.
- (xiv) Good attendance will be encouraged in school by all teachers.
- (xv) Attendance information will be shared with parents twice yearly at parent's consultation meetings and also at the end of the year with school reports.

6. Lateness.

Children are expected to arrive to school on time every day. We actively discourage lateness and the school's first step will be to speak to the parent of the child bringing them to school. All lateness must be recorded on the school's register with a reason for the lateness. The class doors are open from 8.30 until 8.50am and the register is completed at 8.50am, at the beginning of the first lesson in school.

Lateness will be monitored in the same way as attendance. If lateness still persists then the parents will be invited to discuss this with the Attendance Team in school to look at what the barriers are and what support and advice can be put in place to improve punctuality.

If a child arrives after the close of registration then they will have been initially marked absent. The office staff will amend the register. This is very important especially in the case of an evacuation of the building.

Lateness is detrimental to a child's positive start to the school day. It often means they have missed the morning greeting with their class, and it also is embarrassing for them as they walk into the classroom once lessons have started. This can reduce your child's self-esteem and self-confidence in school.

7. Family Holidays/Application for Non-Attendance in School

Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. All requests for leave of absence should be completed on the Sandwell Leave of Absence form and this should be returned to school prior to booking and at least 10 days before

the absence. The Head Teacher will then decide on whether or not the leave of absence can be authorised, and they will only do so if there is an exceptional reason for a child to be absent from school during term time.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the child still goes on holiday, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school will refer the absence to the School Attendance Support Service where a fixed penalty fine may be issued. The regulations do not allow school to give retrospective approval. Retrospective requests cannot be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised and will be referred to the School Attendance Support Service

We do not authorise absences in school time for holidays, visiting sick relatives, birthdays, shopping etc.

In line with legislation we will refer unauthorised leave of absence of 5 days or more to the School Attendance Support Service. Such a referral may lead to a fixed penalty notice being issued.

Please be advised that parents who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance can be fined £60 (per parent, per child).

Moat Farm Infant and Nursery School does not authorise holidays in term time. The Head Teacher only has the power to authorise the absence in exceptional circumstances.

8. EWO/Other Agencies

Sandwell School Attendance and Support Service work closely with the school in monitoring attendance and lateness. Children causing concern, due to their attendance, are reported to this service.

The school may refer children to the school nurse, social services, or any other agency, where it is deemed appropriate, to offer support and guidance regarding attendance issues. This is done in collaboration with the School Attendance and Support Service and parents.

9. Parents

Parents should feel supported and not threatened by the school's attendance policy. Parents should be aware that the attendance monitoring procedures are there to keep them informed so that appropriate action can be taken. School can provide work packs/activities for children who are absent for more than a few days. Parents are welcome to discuss attendance concerns with the class teacher; attendance lead, head teacher or the School Attendance and Support Service whenever they feel it is appropriate. The school's policy should be conveyed to the parents by the school prospectus, website, newsletters and by talking to them as and when appropriate.

Parents will:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time each day.

- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with further phone call if absence is more than 1 days.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the dentists, opticians etc. outside of school hours.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties or refusing to attend.
- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time, where this is unavoidable, send a written leave of absence request to the Head Teacher at least 10 days in advance of the holiday.

10. Children Missing in Education

There are many reasons why a child may become missing in education. Although not exhaustive, the most common being:

- Childs at risk of harm/ neglect – for children who are in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to children's social care and the police, if appropriate;
- Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families;
- Children of Service Personnel;
- Missing children and runaways;
- Children who cease to attend school;
- Children of new migrant families.

- Taken from CME 2016

Schools' responsibility: Schools must enter children on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the will attend the school. If a child fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity. School will return a form to the Local Authority, detailing information on the child. Schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their children, therefore must closely monitor child's attendance through their daily register. As part of this, it is important that children with poor attendance are referred to the local authority. (CME 2016)

11. Deletions from the register

School will seek to make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child, jointly with the local authority. The local authority should be notified in advance of the deletion, when the school becomes aware that the deletion will be made. School must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a child's name from the school admission register under any of the grounds set out in the CME 2016 guidance.

When removing a child's name, the local authority must be notified of:

- a) The full name of the child;
- b) The full name and address of the parent with whom the child normally resides;
- c) At least one telephone number of the parent;
- d) The child's future address and destination school (if known);
- e) The reason(s) why the child name has been removed from the admission register.

Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as it is possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education.

Where a child has not returned to school for ten days following an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the child can be removed from the admission register when the school and local authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child. Your child will then lose their place at Moat Farm Infant School.

Further links to guidance for schools

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[School attendance | Sandwell Council](#)