



Mowmacre Hill
Primary School

Striving for Excellence, United in life-long learning for a better tomorrow

ATTENDANCE POLICY 2023/24

Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. As a school we will work closely with the Education Welfare Service to support regular school attendance. This school attendance policy is written to reflect the law and also the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

It is very important that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how we will achieve this together.

The Policy has an additional section that relates to our children from Travelling Communities, see Appendix A

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence (including lateness) 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 your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility; failing to ensure your child's regular attendance and permitting their absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (for each parent/carer) and/or prosecutions.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility; parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff (see Appendix B for more details).

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide you with reports on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality is, and how this relates to their attainment.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying and celebrating individual and class achievements.
- Reward good attendance or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Holding weekly assemblies on attendance highlighting and celebrating achievements.
- Regularly sending letters home updating you on your child's attendance and reminding you of your statutory duty and potential consequences if there is a failure in cooperation.

Understanding types of absence:

By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either **authorised or unauthorised**. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings and/or afternoons away from school for a genuine reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes which are supported with medical evidence (*please see page 4; Absence procedures*).

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (i.e condoned absence)
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- absences linked to shopping, looking after other children, birthdays
- trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed (see section below).

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be addressed by the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better 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 makes things worse.

Any prolonged absence which has been identified as being due to illness, but no medical evidence is provided, will go down as unauthorised.

Reception/F2 Policy and Flexi Schooling

- Mowmacre Hill Primary School do not offer flexi-schooling at any stage after Nursery, and this is no way linked to the age of the child (e.g under 5 years old).
- **ALL parents of children in Reception/F2 have the responsibility of ensuring that their child(ren) attends school every day and on time.**
- If parents feel that they have a case of exceptional circumstance, they **must** first discuss the situation at length with the Head teacher. Parents DO NOT have the final decision on their child's attendance structure at school.
- Any exceptions made will ONLY be at the Head teacher's discretion and will be based on careful consideration of the child's wellbeing and on all information provided by the parent.
- ALL decisions made regarding a child's attendance and structure of schooling will ultimately be decided by the Head teacher.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of their sessions over the school year for whatever reason, including authorised absences. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' full support and co-operation to tackle this. If a child has less than 100% and there is any unauthorised absence, the position is that the child could have attended more regularly and this will be a concern.

We monitor all pupil absence closely and where the school has concerns about your child's attendance, we will be in touch with you about this.

PA pupils are identified and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. All our PA pupils will be closely monitored as part of a whole school attendance process. Actions to tackle PA, may include: *additional support through a Mentor or support staff, use of nurture groups, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance*. All children who fall into the PA category are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), will have a letter sent home and may be invited to an attendance panel meeting.

If a child falls below 50% attendance, they will be subject to a 'Severe Absence Action Plan'. Actions to tackle severe absence, alongside the ones for PA listed above, may include: *EWO meetings with parents and signposting to wider support services (e.g school nurse, GP etc)*.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Or, you can come into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you either then or at a later point.
- Where your child's health is directly affecting their attendance, you will be required to provide some form of medical evidence i.e the prescribed medicine, a medical letter, prescription note, or proof of appointment / consultation. **Failure to do so will result in an unauthorised absence.**

NB: Notes/letters that you send us will be stored on your child's file.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence (*and on subsequent days*) if we have not heard from you;
- Write to you if we are concerned about your child's attendance to alert you to a concerning emerging pattern or level of absence.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our *Attendance Officers and/or Senior Leadership Team* if absences persist;

- Refer the matter to the EWO if attendance is a concern.
- In some circumstances, if your child is absent from school and has not been seen, we will arrange for a visit to your home to be undertaken to establish that your child is safe. On these occasions, with parental consent, we may bring your child back to school with us. This visit could also be undertaken by a Police Officer.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about a variety of matters, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number; if we don't have your contact number, something important may be missed. *There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year. In addition to holding a contact number for parents, we ask for two additional numbers in case of an emergency. Please provide these to the school office.*

The Education Welfare Officer:

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the EWO from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement with parents/carers. However, if attempts to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court.

Full details of the options to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. (Please note that Penalty Notices may be issued by the Local Authority immediately following a period of holiday-related leave that has not been authorised by the school.)

Parents/carers or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority on 0116 454 5510. They can also be reached by e-mailing education.welfare@leicester.gov.uk.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and they do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news

for the day. Pupils arriving late disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and this in itself can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **08:50 am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **09:00 am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

The registers will be closed at **9.15am** in accordance with the 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 Penalty Notice or be prosecuted if the problem persists.

If your child is regularly late, you will be asked to meet with the **Attendance Officers and/or the Senior Leadership Team** to resolve the problem. You can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays in Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help their child by not taking children away in term time. 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 and Fixed Penalty Notices. There is **no automatic entitlement** in law to time off in school time to go on holiday or other trips.

All applications for leave must be made in advance. Parents are required to comply with the school's procedure for requesting leave of absence for their child (*please see page 8, section titled 'procedure for requesting leave of absence'*). In accordance with the law, agreement will only be given where the Head teacher considers the reason for the request to be exceptional in nature.

It is important that all parents/carers are aware that requests for leave should be made prior to making any bookings. Also, that the decision made by the Head teacher will be confirmed in writing and without this written confirmation, it cannot be taken that there is agreement to authorise all or any of the absence.

Any period of leave taken without the written agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to each parent for each child. Penalty Notices are fines of £60 which increase to £120 if not

paid within 21 days. Failure to pay by the 28th day will usually mean that the Local Authority proceeds to the Magistrates' Court in relation to the parent's failure to ensure regular attendance.

For unauthorised absence from August 2024, Penalty Notices will increase to £160 per parent per child (discounted to £80 if paid within 21 days). If there is occasion to issue a second Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence within a rolling 3 year period, it will be issued at the higher rate of £160 per parent per child, with no opportunity to pay at the lower level. A Penalty Notice cannot be issued if there is a third occasion of unauthorised leave of absence in the rolling 3 year period and it is highly likely that the local authority will take direct prosecution action in the Magistrates' Court which can result in you receiving a criminal conviction. Please also be aware that any cases of extended periods of unauthorised absence, linked to holidays or trips away, are highly likely to result in prosecution action by the local authority.

Procedure for requesting leave of absence:

If you plan to take your child on a leave of absence you are required to inform the school by doing the following:

- Inform the Attendance Officers and your child's teacher at the earliest opportunity.
- Complete a '*request for an absence of leave*' form which can be collected from the school office and hand it back to the office with any relevant documentation i.e flight details.
- Wait for a written confirmation from the school informing you of the Headteacher's decision.

School targets, projects and initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The Attendance target for the school for 2023/24 is 96%.

Throughout the school year, we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our *bulletin/newsletter* and we ask for your full support.

We will also communicate this information regularly to children in our weekly attendance assembly. This includes:

- Celebrating and rewarding weekly class attendance to the highest attending class.
- Weekly reward for randomly selected children who have achieved 100% attendance for the week.
- Termly certificates for children who achieve 100% attendance for the term.
- Termly rewards for the class who has the highest overall attendance for the term.

The registration system

The school will use a computerised system for keeping school attendance records. The national codes in Appendix C will be used to record attendance information.

If you would like a copy of your child's attendance record at any point, please ask **at the school office**.

Security of registers

By law, registers must be kept for at least 3 years. Electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made. These also need preserving for at least three years. The registers will be safely stored on an encrypted MIS system.

Use of data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

Date of policy: July 2023

Review Date: July 2024

DISSEMINATION OF THE POLICY

The policy will be given to all members of staff and copies will be available for parents.

PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The head teacher, members of the senior management team and members of the leadership team, will monitor the policy.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Sandra Lloyd, Attendance Officer
Dawn Breeze, Attendance Officer
Estelle Ewing, Deputy Headteacher
Matthew Peet, Headteacher

See Appendix B for the full details of staff roles and responsibilities linked to attendance.

Appendix A

CHILDREN FROM TRAVELLER COMMUNITIES

Traveller children of compulsory school age are expected by law* to attend at least 200 sessions out of the possible 380 sessions per school academic year. The use of the Traveller code (T) for more than 180 sessions could indicate that the pupil has failed to meet this requirement. Please note that absence for travelling purposes should only be coded "T" when the parent is engaged in trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. If this is not the case, the child is required to be in school as usual.

*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

It is important that there is consistency between schools in relation to the approach to the absence of Traveller children and this school therefore adopts this policy.

The attendance of children from travelling families is treated with equity and fairness taking into account the cultural needs of our Traveller community; the culture of travelling families can require travel for genuine work purposes and is recognised nationally.

However, it has also been recognised that Traveller children's attendance tends to be very low and can result in significant problems with achievement, attainment and whole school attendance performance management.

Of particular importance is:

- a) The coding of the absence of Traveller pupils in schools
- b) Movement among Traveller families; children may leave and return at the parents' will and at very short notice, with no indication of the whereabouts of a child and/or his/her welfare
- c) This in turn makes it difficult for the school to exercise the duty of care to children and to provide a good education to each and every one of our pupils. It is important that the school is able to monitor, assess and review children's development and to ensure that children are progressing.

Whilst respecting the need for Traveller families to conduct their day to day businesses, it is important for everyone to work together to maximise the opportunity for all children to achieve and attain through improving attendance and punctuality in school. Traveller families are therefore subject to the same limitations and constraints in regulation as all other families albeit with discretion where travel is for business purposes.

Traveller families will be requested to complete a Traveller Request Form before a child's

period of absence from school commences where travel is for business purposes and/or the child will be accessing education in another location. See Appendix C for a copy of the form. Requests for absence of any other nature should be made using the schools leave of absence request process.

Please note the following:

Absence linked to travel for the reasons listed below will not constitute travel for work purposes. The school must conform with regulations to provide equality for all pupils and set the foundations for a fair Attendance Policy for the whole school population:

1. Bereavement
2. Weddings
3. Visiting Relatives
4. Absence the family feel is religious observance where this is in excess of 1 day exclusively set apart by the religious body
5. Pre-wedding preparations and weddings
6. Birthdays

Where a family does not inform the school or seek permission for absence before departure, the absence will not be authorised.

Traveller Pupil Tracking Form - Guidance

The purpose of the form is to record the proposed leave of pupils from the travelling communities, recording details of their local residence and their current contact numbers. The purpose of the form is also to record information about intended travel dates and the expected date of return. If the family is staying on a Local Authority site in another area of the country, the details can be recorded and confirmed.

If the student is dual registered with a school outside of the local authority, this information should be confirmed and the dual registration procedures undertaken accordingly.

The purpose of this process is to support good practice, to encourage traveller families to share their proposed arrangements prior to leaving and to ensure that effective contact is maintained. The Traveller Pupil Tracking Form should assist in reducing cases of children deemed to be missing in these circumstances and therefore strengthen the safeguarding procedures in place, as well as ensuring that children's school attendance is maximised.

Together, we anticipate a continued improvement in attendance at school by working jointly with parent(s)/carer(s), specialist support from the Traveller Education Service and the Education Welfare Service to achieve better educational outcomes for our Traveller Children and Young People.

TRAVELLER PUPIL TRACKING FORM

In the interest of pupil welfare the school and parent/s will complete the following information together *before pupil(s) travel*:

Child's Name:	Child's dob:
Base 1: Leicester address with post code:	

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/ Carer(s) Name(s):
Base 2: Address with post code (other residence):
Reason for travel:
Landline telephone number:
Mobile telephone number:
Email address:

TRAVEL DATES

Travel Date	HT1	HT2	HT3	HT4	HT5	HT6
Expected Return date	HT1	HT2	HT3	HT4	HT5	HT6

School details where child is dual registered:

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Education Packs provided Y / N

Please note:

Traveller children whose whereabouts are unknown can be deleted from the school roll in the same way as other (non-traveller) pupils after thorough investigations have been undertaken and the pupil has not been located. In all cases, the school complies with the LA and Maintained Schools Protocol on the Management of Children Missing From Education.

Appendix B – Staff roles and responsibilities for attendance in school

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The headteacher (Matthew Peet- mpeet@dsatmowmacrehill.org) is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated attendance senior leader (Matthew Peet) is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis

The school attendance officers (Sandra Lloyd - sllloyd@dsatmowmacrehill.org Dawn Breeze – dbreeze@dsatmowmacrehill.org) are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering support to pupils and families
- Devising strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/Carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it to be passed on to the Attendance Officers.
- Transfer calls from parents/Carers to the Attendance Officers in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Appendix C – National register 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. pupil attending other establishment)	<i>Not counted in possible attendances</i>
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> 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	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	school closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances