



Attendance Policy

Mere Green Primary School is a member of the ATLP

Mere Green Primary School

Attendance Policy

The staff and Governors at Mere Green Primary School are committed to ensuring the highest possible school attendance for all its pupils. We understand that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Our aim at Mere Green is quite simple. We will work alongside parents and families to endeavour that pupil attendance is well above the national average. We will do this so that we can ensure that our children have the best possible chance to achieve at school and that they can begin their adult lives with at least the same chances as those others they will be competing with in their future lives of training and employment.

The School Day

Year Group	Doors Open	Doors Close
Nursery	8.30am	8.35am
Reception	8.45am	8.55am
Key Stage 1	8.45am	8.55am
Key Stage 2	8.45am	8.55am

Expectations

Pupils

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day

All pupils are expected to strive to achieve an attendance target of at least 97% and to aim for 100%.

Parents/ Carers

We expect that parents and carers will:

- encourage regular school attendance for their child and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually and are prepared for school
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence and send a letter on their return to school
- contact the school promptly whenever a problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually. Parents should inform the school on each day their child is absent, before 8.45am and, where an absence exceeds one or more, should provide a letter/email on return explaining the reason for absence.

Parents should avoid making medical/ dental appointments during school hours and holidays should not be taken in term time. Where this is unavoidable, requests for leave of absence should be made using the appropriate form, available from the office or school website.

School Staff

We expect that our school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, twice daily
- monitor every pupil's attendance
- contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence
- contact those families whose child's attendance has dropped below 95% on a regular basis
- encourage good attendance
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children; provide a safe learning environment; provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the Academy's expectations with regard to regular school attendance
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, and Assistant Head Teachers

Late Arrivals At School

When a child arrives late at school he/she misses the teacher's instructions and the introduction to the lesson. The child may also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late. Frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning lost, and can seriously disadvantage the child.

We strongly urge parents to ensure that their children arrive in school on time. All children who arrive in school late after the close of registers at 9.55am will need to be signed in as a late-comer. Lateness will be monitored by our Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and Assistant Head Teachers.

Leave in Term Time

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and holidays in term time are not permitted.

If a leave of absence in term time is required for exceptional circumstances, such as a death or serious illness in the immediate family a request for leave of absence form must be completed. This can be obtained from the school office (see Appendix 1). The Head Teacher will then decide whether or not to authorise the absences by reference to criteria provided by the LA.

Encouraging Attendance

At Mere Green we will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance including:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- by responding promptly to a child or parents' concerns about the school or other pupils
- by offering support for pupils who experience attendance difficulties
- by recording accurately attendance and punctuality during morning and afternoon registration.
- by publishing and displaying attendance statistics
- by celebrating good and improved attendance
- by monitoring pupils' attendance and informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, or when their child's attendance drops below 95%
- arranging meetings with parents/carers if necessary

Responding to Non Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, for all irregular attendees, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 10.00 am the school will endeavour to contact them that day.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. If the school cannot make contact with a listed school contact for that child then a home visit will be carried out.
- Parents/carers will be notified by letter if there is a cause for concern with their child's attendance
- If a child's attendance is below 90% they are deemed as a persistent absentee and a range of interventions maybe employed including the Local Authorities Fast Track to attendance procedures.

Penalty Notice

The government has given LAs the power to issue fixed penalty notices where parents or carers are considered capable of but unwilling to ensure their child attends school regularly. The Anti-Social Behaviour Act introduced these additional powers in February 2004.

Penalty notices are aimed at "unauthorised absences" – times when a child misses school without a valid reason (or without permission from the school) or if a child is regularly late getting into school. Parents could also be issued with a penalty notice if they take their child on holiday in term-time or if their child stays away longer than agreed any agreed Leave of Absence for exceptional circumstances.

The aim of a penalty notice is to improve parents' efforts in getting children to attend school. Once a penalty notice has been issued a parent cannot appeal against it and must pay the fine.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform our school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from our school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving our school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- The new home address, if it is known

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the child will be reported missing from education.

School Organisation

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

Responsibilities

The Head Teacher, Deputy and Assistant Head Teacher and Governors

- Adopt and review the Attendance Policy.
- Ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided.
- Initiate a scheme for contacting parents of irregular attendees and to raise attendance concerns
- Ensure that key staff have time-tabled periods for liaison and follow-up work with parents and other staff in school.
- Initiate an attendance award scheme with assemblies, certificates and rewards
- Monitor and evaluate attendance and punctuality regularly
- Meet with parents to discuss attendance concerns

Class teachers

- To complete attendance records accurately and punctually (twice daily)
- To follow up any unexplained non-attendance
- To record all reasons for absences in the register
- To inform the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher/ Assistant Head Teacher of attendance concerns.

Attendance Team

- Co-ordinate the scheme to contact parent/carers of non-attendees, this includes phone calls, texts and home visits
- Ensure that reasons for absence are correctly coded on the registers
- Report attendance concerns to the headteacher
- Complete safe and well checks for absent pupils
- Complete referrals to Children Missing in Education
- Provide termly attendance data reports to the headteacher

The Attendance Officers and Pastoral Lead will provide guidance on intervention and continue to monitor attendance on a case by case basis. Where necessary this may lead to legal intervention and prosecution.

Types of Absence

Authorised Absence

It is up to the Head Teacher whether to authorise an absence. Requests to authorise absence, other than illness, will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Where attendance is a serious concern the Head Teacher may not authorise any further absence due to illness without medical evidence.

Unauthorised Absence

It is a parent's responsibility to ensure that their child attends school. Absence from school will not be authorised for holidays, shopping, birthdays, or other reasons.

Parents and staff should understand that just because an explanatory letter from a parent has been received by the school, this does not mean that the absence will be necessarily authorised.

Where attendance is a serious concern attendance will not be authorised due to illness unless medical evidence is provided.

Where students are taken leave of absence due to holiday, Parents can be fined by the local authority for taking their child on holidays during term time without the authorised consent of the school.

Illness

Parents/ carers are asked to contact the school by 8.45am on each day of absence. The school can make a decision not to authorise prolonged or repeated absences without doctor's note. Parents will be informed if the school seeks confirmation from the child's GP or other medical Practitioner e.g. hospital consultant.

Sickness and/or Diarrhoea

Children with diarrhoea or vomiting should stay away from school for 2 days after their symptoms have gone. Parents must still call each day to inform us of their child's absence.

Covid 19

Please see current government guidance.

Lateness

Pupils arriving after the register has been closed will be considered as late. Students arriving after the gate is locked at 8.55am will need to sign in at the main office and wait until a member of staff is available to escort them to class.

Persistent Absence

The Department for Education focuses on both authorised and unauthorised absence. "Persistent absence" refers to absence of more than 10%, whether authorised or unauthorised. At Mere Green we will work with parents if they are identified as a Persistent Absentee.