

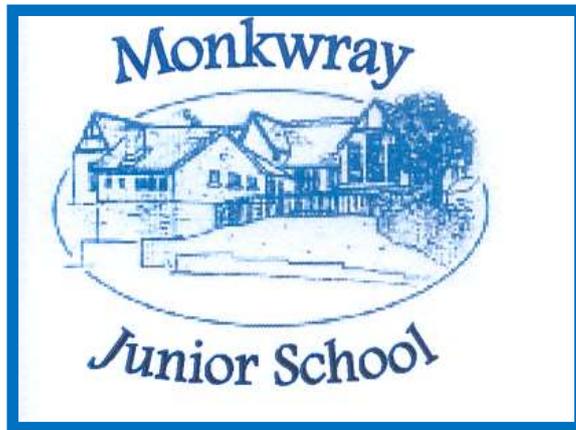


“Be Brave, Be Bright and Be YOU!”



**Monkway
Junior School**

MONKWRAY JUNIOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY



Head Teacher – Mrs Pamela Telford
School Secretary – Mrs Elaine O’Neil
Learning Mentor – Mrs Lesley Graffin
Designated Governor – Mr Peter M^cQuade

Adopted by Governing Body on: January 2021
Review Date: January 2022

MONKWRAY JUNIOR SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Monkway Junior School 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. Your child should therefore be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

This Policy sets out the importance we give to regular school attendance and how together we will achieve this.

Aims

The expectations of Monkway Junior School are that there will be;

- regular attendance from all pupils, achieving attendance records consistently of over 96% per year and aiming for the highest possible attendance
- no unauthorised absences and that the communication between home and school in regard to absences will be extremely effective
- punctual attendance where lateness will be discouraged by the school and by the parents

Why Regular Attendance is Important

Learning: - Any absence 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 and persistent absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding: - Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

Attendance/Children Missing Education (CME)
Behaviour Management
Health and Safety
Access to the Curriculum
Anti- bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis may be considered a safeguarding matter where there is justification to do so.

The Legal Framework

The Law relating to attendance;

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:-

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Law relating to safeguarding;

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Parents' Duties

It is the legal responsibility of the parent to ensure that their child is registered at a school or has other arrangements which provide an effective education. Furthermore it is incumbent on the parent to ensure that the child attends school regularly and punctually.

The School

The school is required by law to keep and publish records of attendance and absence. Pupils should be registered under their birth names unless they have been legally changed. Where a problem arises the school has a responsibility to notify other agencies.

The Local Authority (LA)

The LA has a duty to satisfy themselves that children who are not in a school system are receiving suitable education. They also have responsibility under the Education Act 1996 for legal action to enforce parent(s) of pupils of statutory school age to ensure their child/ren attend their registered school regularly. The LA employs Inclusion Officers to work closely with schools to monitor school attendance and help parents meet their responsibilities. Failure of parents to fulfil their legal responsibilities in regard to children's attendance may in extreme circumstances lead to an education supervision order/parenting order at court, a penalty notice or a prosecution in the criminal court.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. The current LA procedures are included in Appendix 1.

To help us all to focus on this we will follow a number of procedures;

- Registration takes place in each classroom at 8.55 am and 1.10pm. One whole school day counts as 2 sessions of attendance for each pupil at the school. The maximum attendance achievable in any school year is 380 sessions.
- The completion of registers is a legal requirement.

- The **class teacher is** responsible for taking the register or the person delegated by the class teacher must ensure accuracy according to the procedures.
- All attendance registers are completed using the Scholarpack Attendance module. The Scholarpack attendance module is the school's 'official' register and there is an effective data backup system in operation.
- The school daily spread sheet for the lunch attendance is completed on a daily basis using the information recorded on Scholarpack. In an emergency following an evacuation (e.g. fire) the school daily spread sheet is taken to the meeting points. The responsibility for this lies with the Secretary and then the Head (or person acting) in her absence.
- Attendance registers are closed in the morning at 9.15am. In the afternoon registers do not remain 'open' for any period.

Rewards

Children are actively praised by their teachers for their good attendance and time keeping. Children are rewarded individually with Dojo points if they are in school all week. At the end of each half term these dojo points can be exchanged for an afternoon of free choice activities.

- At the end of every term pupils with 100% attendance are given certificates.
- At the end of the academic year pupils with 100% attendance are given certificates and a reward
- Postcards are sent to parents informing them of their child's attendance half-termly. A colour code system is used:

Green – Excellent Attendance – 99 – 100% - 3 extra dojo points awarded
 Orange – Good Attendance – 97 – 98% - 2 extra dojo points awarded
 Red – Satisfactory Attendance – 95-96% - 1 extra dojo point awarded
 Black – Attendance needs to be improved

Absence

There will possibly be times when a child is unable to attend.

Short Term Absences

These may be due to illness; bereavement; attendance at the doctor, clinic or hospital; dental appointments; (where possible appointments should be made outside school hours) Religious Observance; particular needs of travellers. . As such these absences would be authorised.

Reasons which are not acceptable for short term include for example shopping, birthday parties etc.

Short term absences must be notified to the Learning Mentor/School Secretary either in person, by telephone, text or by letter. The Learning Mentor/School Secretary contacts families where no reason for absence has been given. If the reason for a short term absence is acceptable (see above) then the appropriate code is entered and the absence has been authorised. Where the reason is not appropriate the absence is counted as unauthorised **as directed by the head teacher**

The school responds in the following way:

- The Learning Mentor/School Secretary will contact parents/carers on the 1st day of absence, via text message, if there has been no notification, this is to ensure the safety of the pupil. The reason for the absence is then recorded in the child's attendance record.
- If there is no response to the first text a telephone call will be made to enquire about the unexplained absence.
- Where a pattern of non-attendance is emerging the parent/carer is invited to visit school to work with school staff to help resolve the difficulties.
- Attendance Panels – The Headteacher and the Learning Mentor meet half-termly to review attendance. All pupils whose attendance is below 95% are discussed further and parents may be invited to attend an attendance panel to look at ways of improving attendance and to make parents/carers aware of the impact regular attendance has on their child's learning and achievement.

The Panel consists of the Headteacher, Learning Mentor, Governor, School Nurse or other agencies as appropriate.

Attendance is reviewed again 6 weeks after the Panel meeting and parents/carers will be informed of any progress and invited to attend a further Panel meeting if necessary.

Long Term Absences

Long term absences may be due to a medical condition. The other main form of this type of absence is holidays. Recent legislation has removed the discretionary 10 day period of absence which covered family holidays. School is now required to refuse requests from holiday absence in term time. The headteacher may grant a leave of absence in **exceptional circumstances**. If you believe that your circumstances are exceptional you can make a request to the school. In considering a request, the school will take into account the child's age, the time of year of the absence and the nature of the visit. The headteacher will also consider the child's stage of education and progress and the child's overall attendance record. The headteacher will not authorise absence unless they believe your circumstances are exceptional. Case law identifies that any holiday or event which can be arranged during school holiday periods should not be authorised during the school term.

Parents who take their children on an unauthorised holiday in term time could be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. The amount of the fine is £60 if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days.

If a parent decides to take their children out of school on holiday during term time we ask that they put it in writing so we have a record. Parents are informed, by letter, that the holiday cannot be authorised and they could be issued with a fixed penalty notice. An attendance leaflet, which includes of the dates

of the school holidays, is sent out at the beginning of the academic year to help parents avoid taking holidays during term-time.

Where a leave of absence during term time is agreed to be exceptional, it is vital that it does not coincide with examinations or other important tests.

Lateness

Late arrival at school is of serious concern as it results in the disruption of the school day for the child concerned who has missed the start of a lesson, for his/her classmates who lose quality teacher time when instructions have to be repeated and for the administrative staff who then have to recalculate pupil numbers particularly for school dinners. Lateness is actively discouraged by the school. Parents are reminded of the importance of punctuality regularly by Newsletter and at Parents evenings. Children are regularly reminded by their teacher and in assemblies.

It is to be expected that very occasionally a child may be late. The concern is in regard to any consistent late arrivals (where there is no avoidable reason). If there are children who fall into this category then the following procedure takes place:

1. Child is reminded by class teacher of importance of punctual attendance
2. Parent is reminded by class teacher of importance of punctual attendance (try to ascertain reason for lateness, circumstances, support strategies etc.)
3. The Learning Mentor/School Secretary is informed by teacher of persisting problem and uses information recorded as reference source
4. The Learning Mentor/School Secretary contacts parent informally (usually by phone) to discuss/ascertain reason for continued lateness.
5. Parents invited to attendance panel to discuss reasons for lateness and strategies to improve punctuality.

Each stage is only reached if there has been no improvement after the previous intervention.

Attendance Records

The following records are kept by the school:

- Admissions Register is completed on the computer
- Scholarpack data—Attendance
- Completed referrals to the Children's Services and their responses
- The school submits all attendance data for the whole school population to the Department of Education at the requested times and a record of these returns is kept in the Heads Office.

Monitoring

The Learning Mentor/School Secretary monitors patterns of attendance on a weekly basis by studying the attendance registers. Where there are individual cases of unauthorised absence, long term absence or other concerns arising from this or from direct referrals from class teachers or the Special Needs Co-

ordinator then the following action is taken:

1. Where there is a developing pattern of absence the Learning Mentor/School Secretary will inform the Head who in turn will send a subsequent letter reminding parents of their responsibilities in regard to attendance.
2. The procedures recommended by the Local Authority will be applied
3. Continued concern may result in contact with the Local Authority Attendance and Inclusion Officer.

In addition OFSTED may monitor absence codes and notes where there are attendance concerns.

Reporting

A child's attendance record is published in half termly reports and end of year reports to parents and at request of staff, parents and relevant outside agencies at various times throughout the year.

Pupil attendance figures are reported to the Main Governing Body Meetings on a regular basis.

Attendance data is submitted to the Department of Education at the requested times. The results of this census with the school percentage for overall attendance and level of authorised and unauthorised absence is then subsequently published on the internet as part of the School Profile.