



**Aspire-Learn-Succeed**

# **Attendance Policy**

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## **Introduction**

*This policy was written following the DFE guidance published May 2022.*

Mill Hill Primary school aims to maximise attendance rates in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take full advantage of the high quality learning experiences available to them. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Mill Hill Primary school have a service level agreement with *Aim Higher attendance* to promote and monitor attendance throughout the year. Contact information will be shared with A Star to enable telephone and face to face meeting if necessary. This ensures families with attendance issues are tracked and any family patterns in absence are analysed and addressed.

## **Definitions**

### **Authorised absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

### **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Any absences due to holiday will be classified as unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is at the Head teacher's discretion to decide what is exceptional circumstances.

Where we have concerns over the amount of illness absence a child has, the parent or carer may be asked to provide supporting medical evidence in order for the Head Teacher

to authorise the absence. If this is the case, the parent or carer will be informed of this decision in writing. Supporting medical evidence could include: medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, doctor's note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence.

If a child is absent or late

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, appropriately dressed and equipped, and in a condition to learn. The school operates a 'First Day Response' system and, therefore, if a child is unable to attend school for any reason, parents are requested to notify the school by phone call, in person or in writing before 9.30 am on the first day of the child's absence. A pupil's absence must be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parent. If the school hasn't heard from parents by 9.30 am, a member of the office staff will attempt to contact the parent/carers by phone and/or text and request a reason for the absence.

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office staff to initiate the First Day Response system.

All staff are made aware of any vulnerable pupils, such as SEN, Looked After Children or children who are subjects of a Protection Plan.

If the school office staff have been unable to make contact with a parent/carers on the first day of absence by telephone or text and the whereabouts of the child is unknown (absent child) the Attendance Officer is alerted and a home visit is conducted where ever possible by the Attendance Officer. Home visits are conducted by Aim Higher Attendance, an external agency in which Mill Hill Primary School has a contractual service level agreement with. If no home visit by school is possible the Police are contacted as the child is considered to be "missing". The parent/carers should provide an explanatory note when the child returns to school to explain the absence. Reasons for absence are recorded on the electronic registration via SIMS register.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

If a child arrives after the gates are closed (8.55 am/1 pm) or after the closing of registers, he/she must report to the school office and be entered in via the Inventory system. The Head Teacher and Attendance Officer will regularly review the data and will contact parents if there are any concerns/patterns evident.

Children will be marked as 'late' if they arrive after the close of registration.

Children will be marked as 'U' if they arrive more than 30 minutes after the close of registration. We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality.

### **Requests for leave of absence**

The 2013 amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 makes clear that the Head Teacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance, and complete the appropriate form.

Time off school for family holidays cannot be authorised. The Head Teacher has the discretion; in exceptional circumstances to authorise short periods off school.

Consideration is given to each request before a decision is reached by the Head Teacher; on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its individual circumstances.

Any leave of absence that has been declined or the parents has not sought approval for will be recorded as unauthorised. These cases will be referred to the Local Authority and a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued to each parent for each student.

### **Long-term absence**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home (via Google Classroom), so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period (3 weeks, not necessarily cumulative), or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school. Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the Attendance Officer will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

The law states that it is the responsibility of the parent or carer to ensure that a child attends school regularly and on time. The school works closely with the Local Authority and will utilise all its sanctions to address unacceptable levels of attendance.

### **Formal Non-Attendance Procedures**

If after a period of formal monitoring and support, attendance does not improve, a decision will be made by the Attendance Lead/ Attendance Officer as part of their regular discussions to refer to the Local Authority Attendance Team.

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act a student is required to attend regularly at school should a student fail to attend regularly legal action may be taken. A \*parent(s)\*

may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice or could be fined up to £2,500 face three months in prison and receive a parenting order. An Education Supervision Order could be sought.

A FPN warning letter may be sent to a parent if their child has 10 or more unauthorised absences during a 10 week period.

A FPN may be issued to a parent if their child has further unauthorised absences during the 15 school days following the receipt of the final warning letter.

A FPN may be issued if a pupil has unauthorised absence resulting from an unauthorised holiday in term time

A FPN currently requires payment, and will result in prosecution for unauthorised absence if unpaid.

A pupil who takes 10 days' holiday during the academic year can only attain 94.7% attendance.

A pupil who takes 10 days' holiday in each academic year could lose the equivalent of 22 weeks (almost 6 months - about 2 terms) during their formal school career.

### **Rewards for good attendance**

Each week, the class or classes with the highest attendance is shared in assembly and displayed in school. The class with the term's best attendance is rewarded with a self chosen activity.

Attendance certificates are given out on a termly basis to pupils who have 100% attendance in that given term.

### **Change of School**

It is important that if a parent/carer decides to send their child/children in their care to a different school that they inform us as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received:

The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next  
The address of the new school  
The new home address, if applicable  
A school transfer form

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 received this information, the matter will be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Team.

### **Children Missing from Education**

Where children have been identified as being missing from education, the school will follow the procedures set out by the Local Authority and immediately inform the

Attendance Team. If the child is subject to a Care or Protection Plan, Children's Social Work Services will be informed.

**Elective Home Education**

Where a parent/carer elects for the child/children in their care to be home schooled, the school will follow the procedures set out by the Local Authority. The individual School will follow the EST checklist for parents considering to home educate and then make a referral to the Local Authority within 10 days. If the child is subject to a Care or Protection Plan, Children's Social Work Services will be informed.

**Off Site Students**

Some students may be educated at other provisions during the school day. Arrangements are made with the provider to ensure that attendance is notified to the school office as early as possible within the session. Students who have temporary or permanent placements within other provisions are registered daily at the provision and confirmation of their attendance is faxed or emailed to the school office at the end of the week. The units are asked to immediately contact parents and carers or use their attendance officers to chase up any absence from the first day.

Monitoring and review

The Head Teacher and Attendance Officer will regularly analyse attendance data in order to help identify patterns, set targets and support and inform policy and practice.

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Head Teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The rates of attendance will be reported in the annual governors' report.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be discussed with the parents and reported to the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer, who may also contact the parents or carers.

The HT will hold meetings with the Attendance Officer in order to identify and support those pupils and families who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

This policy will be regularly reviewed by the governing body.

Signed: .....  
Chair of Governors

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Head Teacher