



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

Name	Attendance Policy		
Agreed by	Full Governing Body		
Date agreed	01/10/24	Review date	Autumn 2026
Signed & dated			

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## Aims

Our Attendance policy aims to:

- Ensure all children are given the maximum potential to achieve by attending school regularly
- Keep all children safe and healthy by monitoring attendance rates
- Work with families in a partnership to find supportive routes to improve attendance
- Strive towards the maintenance of an attendance rate of 96% and above
- Support parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring that children attend school regularly
- Maintain rigorous and accurate records of our attendance and punctuality
- Follow-up on all unexplained absences to ensure the safety and wellbeing of every pupil
- Address patterns of absence and work in partnership with parents/carers to improve attendance at an early stage
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance
- Be inclusive: working with children and families to overcome some of the additional barriers they face in attending school every day
- Increase parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age

## Legislation & Guidance

The law requires compulsory attendance at school for pupils five years old and above. Our expectation is that all pupils should strive for full and punctual attendance. However, we do recognise that some individual pupils and their families may need support in order to achieve this. In considering the authorisation of absences, the school will take into account any circumstances that are in line with the protected characteristics as outlined by the Equality Act 2010. Our Malmesbury Attendance Policy reflects changes and updates to the law on keeping school attendance and admission registers, including a revised set of codes, granting leaves of absence and sharing/granting access to attendance information through the School Attendance (Pupil Attendance) Regulations 2024.

We also follow the New National Framework for issuing penalty notices and reflect changes to the law introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

## Definitions

- **Persistent Absentee (PA):** term used to describe any child's attendance that has fallen below 90%.
- **Punctuality:** being on time. At Malmesbury this is any time between 8:40am and 8:50am
- **Attendance and Welfare Advisor (AWA):** an individual from the local authority who advises and supports schools with attendance policies, procedures and initiatives. They will support any welfare issues and any individual school attendance cases.
- **Authorised Absences:** when a *reasonable and acceptable* explanation has been provided to the school by the person holding parental responsibility.
- **Unauthorised Absences:** when there has been no *reasonable or acceptable* explanation to a child's absence. The school will not agree to this absence and further investigation will be carried out in accordance with the law.
- **Department of Education (DfE):** The Government department responsible for National education programs and policies.
- **Local Authority (LA):** Tower Hamlets local Government

## Roles & Responsibilities

**The Headteacher, Attendance Lead and the Attendance Team will ensure that:**

- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Families are supported where attendance is low to ensure children are making improvements to their attendance.
- When support is needed, all factors will be considered (ie special educational needs, disabilities, etc)
- Attendance targets are set for individual pupils, classes and year groups
- Parents/carers are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or unauthorised
- Pupil attendance and lateness are monitored regularly and tracked for any patterns
- The reward system for good attendance is implemented
- School attendance statistics are reported to the LA and Local Governing Body

**All teachers are expected to:**

- Register pupils accurately and efficiently
- Report pupil attendance and lateness daily
- Encourage pupils to attend school regularly and inform colleagues if there is a problem that may lead to absence
- Discuss initial attendance concerns with families, sharing the impact of missed learning

**Pupils will be encouraged to:**

- Attend school regularly
- Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absence
- Support their families by helping to come to school on time

**Parents and carers are expected to:**

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly in order to uphold their legal responsibilities to ensure their child receives an education.
- Have their children attend school punctually and prepared for the day
- Inform the school on the first day of non-attendance
- Discuss planned absences with the school in advance (e.g. family holidays, special occasions)
- Notify the school of any changes to their contact details

**The Local Governing Board will ensure that:**

- The Local Authority is informed about the long-term absence of any pupils

**The Attendance and Welfare Advisor (AWA) will ensure that:**

- School registers are regularly inspected
- Attendance and lateness is monitored via the registers
- Persistent absenteeism and lateness is identified and parents/carers are contacted to discuss the situation
- They advise the Attendance Lead on systems and procedures for attendance
- Attendance improves through working in partnership with parents, pupils and school

## Registration

Registration times:

- Morning Sessions: 8:40-8:50am - children arrive in school
- 8:55am registers close
- Afternoon Sessions: Nursery 12:15pm, Reception, KS1, Y3 1pm, Y4-Y6 1:30pm

Class teachers close their morning and afternoon registers promptly after registration times.

## Late Arrivals

- A child is late if they arrive after 8.50 am or after the times specified above and arrive through the school admin office

- To avoid missing late arrivals in the school register, the school admin team keep a list of children who have arrived late and check this list against class teachers' registers.

### **Actions for Late Pupils**

- Pupils registered after the timings above are considered late - this is monitored by the Attendance Team and the AWA
- When a pattern of lateness is being noticed (3 or more), a phone call or in-person meeting with the class teacher is arranged to discuss reasons, share the impact of being late on learning and settling into the school day and to discuss any applicable support needed.
- More than 5 lates in a term - a letter will be sent home reminding parents/carers of the need for punctual attendance.
- Persistent lates (continued lateness even after reminders from Attendance Team) - will be referred to the AWA.
- If lates persist after support has been given, the AWA may then issue a fixed penalty notice under the National framework for penalty notices of the "Working Together to Improve Attendance" policy (2024).

## **Absences**

- Parents and carers of children who are absent from school should explain the reason for non-attendance by 9:00 am on the first day of absence. A member of the office staff will attempt to contact all parents/carers who have not contacted the school to try to ascertain a reason for the child's absence.
- All messages (verbal, telephone or written) are acceptable and will be recorded by the office. A member of the office staff will then enter the reason for absence into RM Integris along with any letters/doctor's notes or appointment cards received.
- If a child is away from school for a period of 2 days and after attempts have been made to contact the family by telephone, the Safeguarding Team will carry out a home visit.

### **Authorised absences**

The decision to authorise an absence rests with the Head Teacher and the Attendance Lead/Team following strict guidelines.

#### **Acceptable reasons for authorised absences include:**

- **Illnesses (I)** – If your child is unwell, please contact the school on the first day of absence and then every day of absence that follows. Any absences lasting 3 days or more should be supported by medical evidence, when possible. This can be a doctor's appointment card/text, proof of prescription, temperature reading or copy of prescribed medicine. The school must have a full explanation for absences rather than stating "unwell". In the case of prolonged or frequent bouts of illness, you will be referred to the Medical Lead who may complete a school nurse referral. Where patterns of absence are evident and no medical evidence is forthcoming, the AWA may request parent consent for them to approach the GP directly to obtain evidence.
- If parents are unsure whether or not their child should be kept home, they can refer to the Public Health Agency's "Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings" or they may want to bring their child into school to be seen by our school's Medical Lead.
- **Medical/Dental appointments (M)** - We encourage parents to make doctors/dentist appointments outside of school time so as not to disrupt your child's learning. Where this is not possible, we will require proof of appointment, such as a medical card/ appointment letter, which will allow us to authorise the absence. Children can be collected from the school for appointments during the day and can be returned to school after the appointment.

- **Religious Observance** – any requests will need to be made in writing. A maximum of 3 days per academic year will be considered, where religious observance has to be taken at a fixed point in time. Consultation may be needed with the relevant faith leaders.
- **Exceptional circumstances** - bereavement, relocation etc, can be discussed with the Head Teacher.

### **Unauthorised absences**

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are not permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences" (O).

#### **Examples of unauthorised absence are:**

- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Going for a family day out/shopping
- Interpreting or supporting a parent at a meeting
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Term-time holiday
- Parent's illness (other than in an emergency)
- Where there is no explanation for absence or the school considers the reason given for the absence unsatisfactory.
- Absence following or prior a period of school closure or authorised leave unless satisfactory evidence to justify has been provided

### **Term Time Holidays**

- Parents do not have a legal right to take their children out of school on holiday. In exceptional circumstances only the school may grant a leave of absence with the Head Teacher's approval. Parents must complete an "exceptional term time leave" form which will be agreed by the discretion of the Head Teacher in advance.
- This form also informs the school and the Borough where the child will be during this term-time absence. It is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child.
- Any absences that have not been agreed upon will be unauthorised and will be referred to the AWA who will issue a fixed penalty notice referral after 5 or more days. Unauthorised absences are reported to the Local Authority and the AWA may make contact to discuss and work in partnership with families to work towards improving attendance.

## **Monitoring & Supporting Attendance**

- The school will check pupil attendance records daily, weekly and half-termly. We use this data to help us draw comparisons with the national data as well as with other schools in the Borough.
- Attendance data is used to help the school support families in improving their attendance.

### **Procedures**

- When a pattern of absences or lateness has been recognised, the Class Teacher will speak with parents/carers either by telephone or in-person to ascertain reasons as well as offer support when applicable.
- If the pattern continues and it is found that a child's attendance has fallen below 95% or below 90%, a standard letter will be sent to the parent/carer from the school. The letter will inform the parents/carers of the amount of days absent, overall attendance percentage, as well as information to remind parents/carers of school attendance procedures and policies, and possible support we can provide (ie: School Nurse Referrals, Family Support, etc).
- Where absence has been agreed for exceptional circumstances, or where there is a known serious illness, this will be taken into account. Further monitoring will be carried out to see if attendance shows improvement.

- Additional absences will result in a further letter being sent home or an in-person meeting/phone call with a member of the Attendance Team.
- If poor attendance continues, an official referral will be made to the AWA.
- In these final stages of support, a meeting with the AWA or Attendance Team member may include actions such as home visits, referrals to other agencies, attendance contracts and possible penalty notices.

### Persistent Absentees (PA)

Once a child's attendance falls to 90% for whatever reason, he/she is automatically defined by the Department for Education (DfE), irrespective of the reason for absence, as a Persistent Absentee (PA). If the criteria for PA is met, the Attendance Team and/or the AWA will contact parents/carers regarding the poor school attendance.

### Persistent absence is a serious problem for pupils:

- Much of the work they miss when they are off school is never made up; these gaps in their learning leave children at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career.
- Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement, particularly at GCSE.
- Pupils will lose out on embedding lifelong values, such as Responsibility, High Expectations, Achievement and Confidence in themselves to help prepare them for later in life.
- They miss out on developing their social skills with both their peers and adults alike which helps them develop Respect, Equality and Honesty.
- It will affect their mental well-being as they will not get a chance to connect, stay active and learn something new each day (NHS - 5 Steps to Mental Wellbeing)

### Children Missing Education

In accordance with the DfE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidelines 2016: schools must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. If a parent/carer have not informed the school of the reason for absence by Day 3 of absence, a home visit will be carried out by the school. We will also attempt to contact all emergency contacts we have available. If we are unable to establish successful contact with parent/carer, then a referral will be made to the Children Missing Education Officer in the LA.

Monitoring attendance is an essential part of safeguarding children at Malmesbury. In accordance with, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2021' we shall notify Social Care if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register.

### Penalty Notices

- All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils teaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice.
- All Penalty Notices are to be paid directly to the local authority.

### Threshold for Issuing Penalty Notices

- 10 sessions (1 session = half-day) of unauthorised absences in a

**PENALTY NOTICES**  
New National Framework for Penalty Notices for poor school attendance and unauthorised leave in term time effective from 19 August 2024.

**Per Parent, Per Child**  
Penalty Notices will still be issued to each parent for each absent child.  
For example – 2 siblings being absent for unauthorised leave in term time, will result in each parent receiving two separate fines.

**Penalty Notices will be issued for:**

- Term Time: Leave: 5 consecutive days or more
- 10 sessions of unauthorised absence and/or lateness in a 10 week period

om = 1 session  
pm = 1 session  
1 day = 2 sessions

**First Offence**  
The first time a penalty notice is issued, the amount will be £160 per parent, per child, if paid within 28 days.  
(Reduced to £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days.)

**Second Offence**  
The second time a penalty notice is issued, the amount will be £160 per parent, per child, if paid within 28 days.  
(There is no reduction for any early payment.)

**Third Offence**  
The third time a penalty notice is issued, the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court.  
Fines of up to £2500 per parent, per child, can be issued by the courts.

**BEHAVIOUR AND ATTENDANCE SUPPORT SERVICE**  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Town Hall, 160 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ  
Email: [LBTHAttendance&WelfareServiceAdmin@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:LBTHAttendance&WelfareServiceAdmin@towerhamlets.gov.uk) Telephone: 020 7364 3450

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rolling period of 10 school weeks.

- This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday plus 6 sessions of arriving late).
- These sessions could be consecutive or not.
- The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term in the following school year).
- Only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate.
- First Penalty Notice, 2<sup>nd</sup> Penalty notice costings as outlined in poster.
- If a Penalty notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority will decide whether or not to prosecute further on the case.
- Third Penalty Notice - If the National threshold is met again within a three-year period, alternative action will be taken which may include prosecution. n cases
- In cases where a pupil has moved schools or into a different borough, attendance and penalty information will transfer to the new school where the threshold will still be in effect.

## Collection from School

- Gates open at 3:15 pm for children to be collected by parents/carers.
- Children must be collected before 3:30 - after this time, parents/carers are considered late.
- It is the parents/carers responsibility to collect their own child from school.
- It is the parent/carers responsibility to inform the school if they will be late and/or if an alternative carer will be collecting their child.

### **Pick-Up Arrangements**

- Please inform the school office at the start of the school day if there are any changes to your regular pick up arrangements, this can be done verbally or by written letter/email/text addressed to the office.
- A sibling 13 years or older can collect your child, however you will need to give written notice to the office with the approval of the Head Teacher. The school need to work with families to ensure children are safe when travelling to/from school – this is part of our safeguarding duty.
- Please only contact the school office if your arrangements have been changed in an emergency. This minimizes the disruption caused to the children's learning as all new arrangements have to be telephoned through to the class.

### **Late Collection**

- After 3:30, a parent will be considered late.
- If the parent/carer is late, then the child will be automatically placed in after school club, 'Malmesbury Maximum', where the parent/carer will be expected to pay a fee:
- £5 in the first 30 mins and then the full cost of a Malmesbury Maximum session after that.
- If the parent/carer is late in collecting their child after 5:45 pm, the parent/carer is expected to contact the school immediately. The school will also attempt to contact all emergency contacts.
- If the school has not had a suitable response from families/emergency contacts, Social services will be contacted after 30 minutes. This enables the school to fulfil its safeguarding duty of care.
- Where a pattern of late collections is noticed (3 or more), a phone call or in-person meeting with a senior leader will be arranged to discuss reasons, share the impact of being late and discuss alternative arrangements that need to be made. Where this continues for children attending clubs/Malmesbury Maximum, parents/carers may be asked to make alternative arrangements.

## Leavers

For children leaving our school (other than to go to secondary school) parents are asked to:

- Complete a Leavers Form (which can be obtained from the school office). This asks for comprehensive information about new school details, address details and leaving date.
- When pupils leave and we do not have information about where they have gone, then the child is considered to be a 'Child Missing Education.'
- The Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations which will include liaising with Tower Hamlets, Children's Social Services, the Police and other services to try and locate the child.
- By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

## Celebrating Attendance

When children are in school each day and are on time...

- They begin to embed life-long values, such as responsibility, high expectations, achievement and confidence which prepares them for later in life.
- They achieve academically as they are accessing their learning from the start of the day and are not missing any key learning.
- They are continuously building social skills with their peers and adults alike which helps them develop respect, equality and honesty.
- It helps support a healthy mental well-being as it allows children to connect, stay active and learn something new each day.

### **Incentives & Celebrations**

We have a range of small incentives and celebrations to encourage and recognise great attendance. The school is mindful of being as inclusive as possible and the range of small incentives/celebrations is designed to give everyone a chance to be successful and feel successful. These include:

- When a whole class achieves 100% attendance for an entire week, they will receive a class treat depending on the term (i.e. - hot chocolate during winter months and ice-lollies in the summer months).
- During weekly Celebration Assemblies, the class with the best attendance will be rewarded with a certificate.
- Half-termly, we celebrate those children who achieved 100% attendance for the entire half-term. They receive a sticker and a personal certificate. The class with the best half-termly attendance will receive the Golden Class trophy and will decide with their class teacher on a special reward for their class (i.e. - extra playtime, popcorn, film, etc).
- Throughout the year, we will promote attendance with our "100% Attendance Weeks". Children who come every single day that week will receive a certificate and a small prize (i.e. - pencils, badges, bracelets, etc).
- At the end of the year, children who achieved 100% attendance for the entire school year will receive a medal.

## Links to Other Policies

This policy links to our policies on:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
- SEND Policy and Information Report

Our school attendance policy also links with Government and Department for Education legislation and guidelines:

- Working together to improve school attendance (from 19 August 2024)
- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_applies\\_from\\_19\\_August\\_2024\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf)
- Education Act of 1996
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents>
- Section 23 of the Anti-Behaviour Act 2003
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/38/section/23>
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/208/contents/made>
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/210>
- Department for Education - Statutory Guidance - Behaviour and Attendance
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statutory-guidance-schools#behaviour-and-attendance->
- Public Health Agency's - Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings 2017
- [https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Guidance\\_on\\_infection\\_control\\_in%20schools\\_poster.pdf](https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Guidance_on_infection_control_in%20schools_poster.pdf)