



Attendance Policy (Pupils)

Millbrook Junior School Attendance Policy (Pupils)

Aims:

Millbrook Junior School aims to work together with parents and carers to ensure that all children achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality. Regular attendance is central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Millbrook Junior School aims to promote good attendance and reduce absence (including persistent absence), ensure every pupil has access to full time education and act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents/carers should ensure that their child/children registered at Millbrook Junior School attend regularly and arrive punctually.

Statutory Framework:

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to secure the regular attendance of their school age child/children. Failure to ensure a regular level of attendance is an offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act and may lead to legal action being taken.

Background:

Regular attendance enhances pupil progress. In contrast, significant absence will undermine learning and regardless of ability or effort a pupil will fail to achieve expected progress.

The national attendance target for Junior Schools is 97%.

Attendance is defined as timely presence at sessions (each day consisting of a morning and an afternoon session) recorded in Class Registers.

The school year is 190 days (380 sessions). An absence of 6 days in any given academic year equates to 3.15% and means a pupil will not attain minimum expected attendance.

Every half day absence from school is recorded as either authorised or unauthorised which is why information about the reason for each absence is always required.

There may be occasions when absence will be authorised.

These include:

- Illness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances (such as bereavement)
- Approved sporting activity
- Approved educational activity (e.g. examinations, school trips, visiting new school as part of successful transition)

Parents'/carers' Responsibilities:

- Parents carers should ensure that their child arrives on time for the start of registration (8.50 am). Children arriving after 8.50 am should report to the reception and the Office staff will record the child's name, class and time of arrival in the Late Book

- (Sept. 2020-children should arrive at the correct gate at the correct time, pupils who arrive after the register is closed will be recorded in the late book)
- Parents/carers should ensure that, if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as illness, they should contact the school by 9.00am on each day of absence. This may be done by phone, by letter or in person. Verbal messages from children e.g. siblings, will not be accepted. (Sept. 2020-by 8.30am by phoning the Office)
- For all other absences parents/carers should complete a 'Request for leave of absence from school' form (Appendix 2) and return to the school before the date of the requested absence.
- Should parents/carers fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence, the school will record such absences as unauthorised. In some cases, this may be retrospective and authorisation may be withdrawn should circumstances arise leading the school to decide that the reason given was not truthful. If this occurs, this will be discussed with the parents/carers.
- Parents/carers should not allow their children to take unauthorised leave in term time. In line with the latest legislation family holidays can no longer be authorised by the school.

Lateness:

The school gates open at 8.30 am and school begins promptly at 8.50 am. All pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. If any child arrives after 8.50 am they should enter school via the main entrance and report to the School Office. If accompanied, a parent or carer should give a reason for the lateness, which will be recorded in the register. If unaccompanied depending on how late the child has arrived parents/carers may be contacted by telephone to ensure they are aware of their child's lateness and to give them the opportunity to provide an explanation. The child will then be sent to their classroom. If a child arrives more than 50 minutes after the close of registers (9.40 am) it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session (if the lateness cannot be satisfactorily explained). (Sept. 2020-If a child arrives after the register has closed, they will be recorded as late)

Children who are entitled to school transport will not be penalised if the bus or taxi arrives late.

Children who are persistently late

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken.

- If a child arrives after 9 am five times in a half term all adults with parental / carer responsibility will be sent a letter and may be invited to attend a Parent Contract Meeting (PCM). At this meeting parents / carers will have an opportunity to discuss factors affecting their child's punctuality with the Headteacher. At this meeting targets will be set to improve punctuality and a follow-up meeting will be scheduled for five weeks later. If no improvement is made in five weeks the child may be referred to external agencies and will be offered an EHA (Early Help Assessment). (Sept. 2020-if a child arrives late according to their registration time)

Illness

Should a child be absent due to illness for five consecutive days, evidence of seeking medical advice will be requested to support the explanation of the child's absence and ensure that medical advice has been sought. An appointment card, copy of text message or sight of recently prescribed medicine is sufficient for this purpose.

Should a child have been absent for two continuous weeks without a satisfactory explanation having been received, or should there be safeguarding or other immediate welfare concerns then the school will make a referral to the Local Authority and appropriate outside agencies. Should the child be subject to Child Protection or Child in Need, the child's social worker will be notified immediately.

(Sept. 2020-if your child has COVID 19 symptoms, you must follow the government advice, self-isolate and take a test-or follow any updated guidance if changed. The child will not be able to return to school until we have been informed that the test was negative. If your child tests positive it is important that you notify the school immediately.)

Other Reasons for Absence

If parents/carers wish for their child to be absent from school for any other reason, they are asked to complete a 'Request for leave of absence from school' form (Appendix 2) and return it to the school. The Headteacher will complete the reply slip to inform them as to whether the absence has been authorised.

Should any request for authorising absence be refused, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised' in the school register. Families who persistently take their children out of school for unauthorised absence will be referred, with all accompanying evidence, to the Local Authority.

Unaccounted absence, recurring absence and extended periods away from school could result in the need to re-apply for a school place.

Unauthorised Absence in Term Time:

The school is guided by the updated current legislation, namely The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. As per the 2013 amendments, all previous references to holidays in term time/family holiday have been removed and there is no right to remove a child from school for reason of holiday for up to ten days. An absence can only be granted in 'exceptional circumstances' and the parent/carer must make a case for taking leave for their child during term time.

The regulations mean that:

- Parents/carers cannot demand a leave of absence as an automatic right. Any requests must be made in advance and in writing. Evidence may be requested to enable a decision to be made.
- All requests will be considered on their own merits.
- Extended periods of absence may be granted but only in exceptional circumstances.

If a Headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for the Headteacher to determine the length of time that the child's absence will be agreed. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Absence which has not been agreed will lead to the pupil being marked with 'unauthorised absence'.

Unauthorised absence of five consecutive days and over will be referred to the Educational Inclusion Partnership Team (EIPT) which may result in a penalty notice for each parent/carer of the child/children. The current level of the penalty notice is £60 per parent/carer, per child. A family with two parents and two children could incur a fine of £240.

Under the Education Act, the definition of the 'Parent/Carer' is

- An adult who has parental responsibility for the child.

- An adult living in the household and accepts day to day care of the child.
- An adult who has assumed temporary day to day responsibility by taking the child on holiday (for example, a grandparent or other relative).

Unauthorised absence of six days in a five-week period will also be referred to the Educational Inclusion Partnership Team. An unsatisfactory level of unauthorised absence can also be referred to the Educational Inclusion Partnership Team and 10% of unauthorised absence would place the child into the persistent absentee category.

Persistent absentees:

Persistent absentees are defined as children whose attendance is below 90% and where unsatisfactory reasons are given for absence. The procedures outlined below may apply to children whose attendance is above 90% but where there are concerns about deteriorating attendance or where patterns are emerging, for example, regular absences on particular days or persistent lateness.

All of the above policy applies to persistent absentees, with the following additions:

- Children's names are recorded on Sims (the database used to record children's attendance). All class teachers are made aware of whom these children are.
- Any messages received regarding absence of these children will also be recorded on Sims.
- If no message is received, the office staff must attempt to contact the parent at the earliest opportunity. If no contact is made or the message received is unsatisfactory, this should be recorded on sims. This information will also be sent in the Session Attendance report to the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and the Family Support Worker daily.
- If a child's attendance falls below 90% all adults with parental responsibility may be invited to attend a Parent Contract Meeting (PCM). At this meeting parents will have an opportunity to discuss factors affecting their child's attendance with the Headteacher. At this meeting targets will be set to improve attendance and a follow-up meeting will be scheduled for five weeks later. If no improvement is made in five weeks, the child may be referred to external agencies and become subject to an EHA (Early Help Assessment).

School Responsibilities:

- Teachers will complete registers in accordance with guidance given by the Headteacher.
- All absence notes from parents should be dated and initialled by the class teacher and returned to the office with the register, where they will be sorted. Only notes regarding absences where there are concerns, need to be brought to the attention of the Headteacher, who may then choose to speak to the parents. (Sept. 2020-parents/carers will be phoning the Office so this will not be necessary)
- The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance with the statutory requirements. Registers will be called twice a day at 8.50am and 1.15pm. Should a child be late or absent, the appropriate code will be entered in the register (Appendix 1). Should no explanation have been received by 9.30am to fulfil our safeguarding duty to the child/children, the School Office will contact the parents/carers of the child for an explanation of their absence using the contact details held at school and a record will be made that these calls have been made. This procedure will again be followed on the second day of absence, if no contact has been made by day three and no satisfactory explanation has been received the school will write to the parents/carers and a home visit will be made to the child's address. (See Child Missing from education Procedure-Policy 85)

Sept. 2020-morning registers will be completed in line with staggered start times for classes.

- The School may decide to contact schools attended by siblings to see if siblings are in attendance on a particular day.
- A daily Session Attendance report is sent to the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and to the Family Support Worker identifying children who are absent and any further information related to their absence.
- Should a class teacher have any concerns about a child's attendance and punctuality, the Headteacher must be informed. This can be done in person or via email.
- The School Business Manager will inspect registers weekly in order to ensure that they are being satisfactorily maintained and to identify any potential attendance problems at an early stage.
- The Headteacher will regularly collect attendance data and use this during meetings with Ofsted, HMI and the Local Authority. These meetings will agree on attendance thresholds and targets and will identify tasks and follow-up actions for both the school and the Administrator.
- Millbrook Junior School will employ a number of strategies to promote regular attendance and punctuality, including: publishing clear attendance information in the school's communication; appropriate personal encouragement for particular children; termly and annual certificates.
- The Headteacher will monitor attendance trends on a regular basis in consultation with the Administrator and will ensure that the Governing Body are made aware of any attendance matters through the Headteacher's report, without identification of the individual families.
- A yearly attendance record for each child will be sent out with the statutory reports.

Target Setting:

Annual targets for whole school attendance will be set annually and shared with Governors.

Summary:

Millbrook Junior School will continue to fulfil its legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school unless there is a good reason for their absence, arrive punctually and communicate promptly with the school when children are unable to attend.

All staff at Millbrook Junior School are committed to working with all families to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the school policy review framework.

Appendix 1

Attendance Codes

Present at School

- \ Present
- L Late (before registers close at 9.40am)

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

- B Educated Off- Site
- D Dual Registration
- J Interview
- P Approved Sporting Activity
- V Educational Trip
- W Work Experience

Authorised Absence

- C Authorised Absence (only exceptional circumstances)
- E Excluded (no alternate provision made)
- H Holiday (only used if there are exceptional circumstances authorised by the Headteacher)
- I Illness
- M Medical and Dental appointments
- R Religious Observance
- S Study Leave
- T Traveller Absence
- X COVID related absence

Unauthorised Absence from School

- G Family Holiday
- N No reason yet given
- U Unauthorised Absence (not covered by another code)
- U Late (after registration closed at 9.40am)

Administrative Codes

- X N/A (relates to 4 year olds not attending Infant School)
- Y Enforced Closure
- Z Pupil not on roll

Appendix 2 – see following page



Millbrook Junior School

Request for leave of absence from school

I request leave of absence for the child/children named below from **Millbrook Junior School** during the dates below:

Name of child/children: _____ (please add class)

Absence requested from: _____ **until:** _____

Child/children will return to school on: _____

Total number of school days requested: _____

Please Note: The school is guided by the updated current legislation, namely The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. As per the 2013 amendments, all previous references to holidays in term time / family holidays have been removed and there is no right to remove a child from school for reason of holiday for up to ten days. An absence can only be granted in 'exceptional circumstances' and the parent / carer must make a clear case for taking leave for their child in term time. Unauthorised absence of five consecutive days and over will be referred to the Educational Inclusion Partnership Team (EIPT) which may result in a fixed penalty notice of £60.00 for each parent / carer of the child / children. The current level of the penalty notice is £60 per parent, per child. A family with two parents and two children could incur a fine of £240.

Reason for request

Please state how this request is deemed exceptional circumstances (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary and attach any documentary evidence to support your exceptional circumstances if appropriate)...

Signed: _____ (parent or carer) **Date :** _____

Your request has been approved due to exceptional circumstances Yes/No

Reason: _____

Signed: _____ **(Headteacher on behalf of Governing Body)**

Date: _____

This form will be completed by the Headteacher, shared with the school's Governing Body, and copied for school records and for the parent to keep for future reference.