

## Attendance Policy

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## INTRODUCTION

Moulsford Prep School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all pupils. Promoting good School attendance, good punctuality and reducing absence is central to ensure:

- every pupil's day-to-day welfare and safeguarding
- every pupil has access to full-time education
- that pupils make good progress academically and personally
- that pupils leave with the best possible opportunities for their future

This policy outlines the responsibilities for the School and parents in ensuring that pupils' attendance at Moulsford Prep School is the best it can be. It also outlines the strategies used by the School, alongside Oxfordshire County Council, to support and improve attendance.

**Early Years** - This policy includes children in Reception who have passed their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. While it does not legally apply to children of non-compulsory school age (younger Reception and Pre-School children), we will strive to support the consistent attendance of these children to enable a positive school experience.

The policy aims for all pupils to attend school regularly so they will be able to take advantage of the educational opportunities available.

Within this document 'parent' is defined as someone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has the care of that child.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Pupils

This applies to pupils when they are developmentally ready to take some responsibility.

- Attend school every day
- Arrive at school on time
- Be appropriately prepared for the day and ready to learn
- Tell a trusted adult if there is a problem that might affect their school attendance

### Parents

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time
- Inform the School, via 'My School Portal', on the first day of absence and each following day, by 08:30 am, with an explanation given
- Provide full contact details, as well as emergency contact details, and update the School if any changes to these occur
- Work in partnership with the School to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during School hours where possible
- Do not book holidays during term-time
- Treat staff with respect
- Actively support the work of the School

- Communicate as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support
- Proactively engage with support offered

### **All School Staff**

- Promote good attendance
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children
- Have an awareness that absence from School is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe
- Expect regular attendance and punctuality from all members of the School community

### **Headteacher and Senior Leadership**

- Ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the School.
- Convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes.
- Empower all staff to take responsibility for attendance and recognise that attendance as an important area of School improvement.
- Have a designated Attendance Officer [the Assistant Head (Pastoral)] in the senior leadership team with clearly assigned responsibilities which are identified within the attendance policy, escalation of procedures and School improvement plan.
- Make sure staff receive professional development and support to deploy attendance systems effectively. The School has 'attendance monitoring' as a standing agenda item within the Safeguarding Team meeting which meets on a half-termly basis to review School attendance in general, as well as individual cases.
- Consult with the Local Authority Education Attendance Service where there are concerns around pupil's attendance or if there is a child missing from education.
- Governors should have an accurate view of School attendance and engage in escalation procedures where appropriate.

## **RECORDING ATTENDANCE**

### **Attendance Registers**

Accurate and timely registers enable the School to safeguard children as well as to recognise and act upon any concerning attendance patterns. Registers are taken at the start of every morning and afternoon session.

### **Lateness**

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child arrives at school on time.

Pupils are expected to be on site by the following times:

- Prep: 8:40am
- Pre-Prep: 8:45am

Pupils who arrive after 8:45am will be marked as late (code U) by the office staff, but counted as present for that session. Teaching staff should always mark any child not present for registration for an unknown reason as 'Unknown' for the office staff to follow up.

## **Responding to Absence**

Parents are responsible for contacting the School when their child is absent to explain the reason. This should be done via 'My School Portal'.

If no reason is given, or further information is required, a phone call is made to parents in the first instance (or by email or letter if unable to make contact).

To ensure effective safeguarding is carried out, and if absence continues without explanation, or if further information is needed, an unannounced home visit may be carried out.

Once sufficient information has been gained, an absence code is determined by the appropriate member of staff in line with DfE guidance in [Working Together to improve School attendance \(2024\)](#). This decision is based on the information provided by parents when the child's absence is reported and will influence whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

## **Reporting and Monitoring Attendance**

Parents have continuous access to their child's attendance percentage via 'My School Portal'. This information also includes dates of any absences recorded and the reasons for these absences.

Attendance will be monitored within the Safeguarding Team meeting, which will meet on a half-termly basis to review attendance figures and trends, and to monitor and review attendance of individuals, where attendance may be a cause for concern.

## **AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

### **Leave of Absence in Term Time**

Parents must get permission from the Headmaster, via the Headmaster's PA ([heads.pa@moulsford.com](mailto:heads.pa@moulsford.com)), in order to take their child out of School during term time. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headmaster's discretion provided that:

- An email request is sent in advance.
- There are exceptional circumstances; exceptional circumstances might include a family funeral, a family emergency or a one-off family event.

Parents should plan holidays within the term breaks and avoid seeking permission from School to take their children out during term time unless absolutely unavoidable.

### **When Absences will be Authorised**

Absences will be authorised if:

- The pupil is absent with leave as agreed by the Headmaster due to exceptional circumstances.

- The pupil is ill and has not been asked to provide proof of absence.
- The parent notifies the School of a medical or dental appointment (which could not be made outside of School hours).
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs. Advance notice of 48 hours is required.
- Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 for which a child performance licence has been issued.
- Only the School can authorise an absence. Where a parent has provided no explanation or the explanation given is not deemed to be valid, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

## **MONITORING AND IMPROVING IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE**

### **Reducing Persistent Absence**

We regularly review cases half termly where attendance is below 95% and we are unaware of extenuating circumstances. We will work with children and families to support the improvement of this figure. These actions may include:

- Regular and supportive telephone contact with the parent/s
- Supportive conversations and/or regular check-ins with the pupil (where appropriate)
- The involvement of appropriate staff members to best support the transition into school should anxiety or emotional wellbeing be identified as a cause for absence
- The use of the Promoting Good Behaviour Policy to offer praise and rewards readily to those who would benefit from improving their perception of school life
- We are keen to work with parents and guardians to ensure that anyone whose attendance is below 90% receives the required support as this is considered 'persistent absence' in the Government guidelines.

Any children whose attendance is below 90% will be monitored weekly.

### **Attendance and Safeguarding**

It is recognised that poor attendance may be a sign or symptom of a wider safeguarding issue that requires further support (this could include but is not limited to domestic abuse, mental health difficulties, substance misuse, or financial strain). Where there are concerns about a child's welfare, action will be taken in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy.

### **Formal and Legal Interventions**

Moulsford Prep School and the Education Attendance Officer will seek to resolve any attendance concerns by working together to support the family with improving a child's attendance. Where this is not successful, or where parents do not engage with support, then more formal procedures may be followed.

### **Support Back into School Following a Period of Absence**

Pupils who have been excluded or have had periods of absence due to ill-health or truancy should receive appropriate support to return to School, build confidence and bridge the gaps in their learning. These plans are drawn up in collaboration with parents and the pupil.

## Appendix I – Breakdown of Attendance Codes

### BREAKDOWN OF AVAILABLE CODES

Please refer to [Working together to improve School attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) page 56 onwards for the full definition of codes available.

Code	Full Name	Description
The student is counted as present		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in School during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the School.
J	Interview	At a job interview, or interviewing with another educational establishment.
P	Sporting activity (approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the School and supervised by someone authorised by the School.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the School or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
The student is counted as absent, authorised.		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence.
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
H	Family Holiday (Agreed)	A leave of absence for a family holiday is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.
I	Illness	This Illness code can be used for any form of illness and is not a medical or dental appointment.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of School hours.
R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day

		designated by the religious body.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the School.
The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.		
U	Unauthorised Absence	If the School is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised. The reason for the absence has not been provided.
These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.		
X	Non-statutory School age absence	Sessions non-compulsory School-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	The School is closed due to an unavoidable cause or the student is unable to travel to the School. It can also be used where the pupil is in custody (for less than four months). This code is collected for statistical purposes but does not contribute to your attendance figures.
#	School Closed To Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial School closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the School is used as a polling station.

## Appendix 2

### **GROUNDINGS FOR DELETING A PUPIL FROM THE SCHOOL ADMISSION REGISTER**

Grounds for deleting a pupil of compulsory school age from the School Admission Register, set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended.

1. 8(1)(a) - where the pupil is registered at the School in accordance with the requirements of a School attendance order, that another School is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at School.
2. 8(1)(b) - except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one School, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that s/he has been registered as a pupil at another School.
3. 8(1)(c) - where a pupil is registered at more than one School, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that s/he has ceased to attend the School and the proprietor of any other School at which s/he is registered has given consent to the deletion.
4. 8(1)(d) - in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that s/he has ceased to attend the School and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at School.
5. 8(1)(e) - except in the case of a boarder, that s/he has ceased to attend the School and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the School at which s/he is registered.
6. 8(1)(f) - in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that -
  - i. the pupil has failed to attend the School within the ten School days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted;
  - ii. the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the School by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and
  - iii. the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
7. 8(1)(g) - that s/he is certified by the School medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend School before ceasing to be of compulsory School age, and neither s/he nor his parent has indicated to the School the intention to continue to attend the School after ceasing to be of compulsory School age.
8. 8(1)(h) - that s/he has been continuously absent from the School for a period of not less than twenty School days and -
  - i. at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2);
  - ii. the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the School by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and
  - iii. the proprietor of the School and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
9. 8(1)(i) - that s/he is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the School at the end of that period.
10. 8(1)(j) - that the pupil has died.



- I 1. 8(1)(k) - that the pupil will cease to be of compulsory School age before the School next meets and -
  - i. the relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the School; or
  - ii. the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the School's sixth form.
12. 8(1)(l) - in the case of a pupil at a School other than a maintained School, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that s/he has ceased to be a pupil of the School.
13. 8(1)(m) - that s/he has been permanently excluded from the School.
14. 8(1)(n) - where the pupil has been admitted to the School to receive nursery education, that s/he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the School.
15. 8(1)(o) where -
  - i. the pupil is a boarder at a maintained School or an Academy;
  - ii. charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the pupil; and
  - iii. those charges remain unpaid by the pupil's parent at the end of the School term to which they relate.

## Appendix 3

### ATTENDANCE MONITORING AGENDA ITEM

**Staff:**

- Assistant Head (Pastoral)/Designated Attendance Officer
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Headteacher
- Head of Pre-Prep
- Head of EYFS

**Meet:**

Half-termly

**Objectives:**

- Review attendance figures (to be sent to Attendance Monitoring Group in advice by Attendance Officer)
- Identify and discuss any children where attendance is below 95%
- Identify reasons for lower attendance
- Agree actions to improve attendance
- Monitoring
- Review
- Contact with parents
- Action plan to support
- Contact with Local Authority and liaison with Local Authority Education Welfare Officer if necessary / appropriate.
- Review children identified at previous meetings
- Maintain a record of children discussed. When children's attendance is below 95%, then this should also be recorded on CPOMS.

Date of Meeting:

Present:

Name and Form of the child	Details of attendance (% and dates)	Reasons for lower attendance	Actions agreed	Member of staff responsible	Review (include date)
			Share with Matron		

## Appendix 4 - Other DfE Guidance

This policy is to be read in conjunction with other DfE guidance, including:

[School attendance - Parental responsibility measures](#)

[Working together to improve School attendance - GOV.UK \(\[www.gov.uk\]\(http://www.gov.uk\)\)](#)

[Keeping children safe in education](#)

[Supporting pupils with medical conditions at School](#)

[Children missing education](#)