

# **Moorside Primary School**



## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2022-2024**



## **MOORSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **PURPOSE, VISION & VALUES**

#### **Our Purpose**

Moorside Primary is a school at the heart of our diverse community in the West End of Newcastle.  
We pride ourselves in being a caring school community where everyone is welcome.  
We strive to deliver an outstanding education for all our children.  
We help everyone to become caring and active citizens  
We encourage everyone to thrive and achieve their full potential.

#### **Our Vision**

We want everyone in our school to work together to make us as good as any school can be.  
We want to create new opportunities for everyone to succeed.  
We want to create a culture which broadens all of our horizons.  
We want everyone to be able to tackle the challenges we will face in an ever changing world.  
We want all of our children to effectively engage with each other and with our community.

#### **Our values**

##### **We all believe that**

Our local community deserves a school they can be proud of.  
We are a caring community where everyone is welcome.  
We all value, respect and support each other.  
Our community has the right to be safe and healthy.  
Our children should have the chance to enjoy and be enthused by their time in our school.

##### **We all work together to make sure that**

Everyone always tries their best and take pride in all that they do.  
Everyone demonstrates good manners at all times.  
Everyone respects each other and show consideration.  
Everyone respects and cares for our environment and resources.  
Everyone celebrates each other's successes and achievements.

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### **1. Aims**

At Moorside Primary School, we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure children have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school on time and not missing any learning.

### **2. Legislation and guidance**

The law requires that children of compulsory school age attend school every day on which it is open. Poor attendance is defined as anything below 90%. The Department for Education expects a minimum attendance rate of 96% for primary aged children.

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The Governing Body**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance, where appropriate.
- Holding the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### 3.2 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation and leading of this policy across the school.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having an oversight of data analysis.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arranging calls and meetings with Parents/Carers to discuss attendance issues.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to children and families.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governors.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### 3.3 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for working alongside the Head Teacher:

- Supporting the implementation and leading of this policy across the school.
- Having an oversight of data analysis.
- Working together to devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to children and families.

### 3.4 The Parents/Carers Advisor

The Parents/Carers Advisor is responsible for working alongside the Head Teacher and SLT:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data.
- Arranging calls and meetings with Parents/Carers to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to families.
- Will work and support families on adhering to a Parenting Contract as a means of support to improve children's attendance.
- Providing regular attendance reports to Head Teacher and SLT reporting concerns about attendance.
- Working with the Head Teacher and other professionals and the LA to tackle persistent absence.
- Working with the Head Teacher to collect information in order to issue fixed-penalty notices where appropriate.

### 3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes (/ \), both in the morning session and the afternoon session ready for collection.

### 3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from Parents/Carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from Parents/Carers to the Head Teacher or in their absence the Senior Leadership Team or Parents/Carers Advisor in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

### 3.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day between 8.45 and 9.00 on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.30 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than **one** emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

### 3.8 Children

Children are expected to:

- Primary school children must attend school every day on time, Monday to Friday.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register (See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes).**

- We will keep an attendance register, and place all children onto this register.
- We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session.

It will mark whether every child is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- For children of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not.
- The nature of the activity if a child is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a child is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for three years after the date on which the entry was made. Children must arrive in school by 9.00 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 am and will be kept open until 9.30 am. The register for the second session will be taken from 12.15 pm and will be kept open until 1.20 pm depending on our staggered lunchbreaks.

### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The child's Parents/Carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the child's Parents/Carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and Parents/Carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the child's Parents/Carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage Parents/Carer to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The child's Parents/Carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A child who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the child's Parents/Carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than **five** working days after the session.
- Call the Parents/Carers on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider carrying out a home visit.
- The school may consider contacting other professionals, where appropriate following all safeguarding procedures, if contact cannot be made with the family.

#### **4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers**

The school will regularly inform Parents/Carers about their child's attendance and absence levels through letters and through planned meetings.

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence to a child during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the child is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office.

The Head Teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's Parents/Carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the Parents/Carers religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

#### **5.2 Legal sanctions**

After liaising with the school, the local authority can fine Parents/Carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

- If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay **£60** within **twenty-one** days or **£120** within **twenty-eight** days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.
- Penalty notices can be issued by the local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after **twenty-eight** days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

### **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Strategies for promoting and celebrating attendance:

- Celebrations weekly in assembly with certificate for best attendance and most improved, Attendance Mascots all displayed within class learning areas.
- Best attendance gain extra playtime on a Friday afternoon.
- Any class with 100% attendance gains extra playtimes both Monday and Friday afternoon.
- Range of other rewards such as working on the meadow.

Other rewards include

- Newsletter celebrating attendance.
- Whole school aware of attendance a key priority.
- Attendance assembly celebrations.
- Rewards, prizes and incentives from Education agencies.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

The School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual child level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Child-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### **7.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify children or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these children and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

### **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance updates with class teachers, where appropriate, and other school leaders and professionals to facilitate discussions with children and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

### **7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a child misses **10%** or more of school, and severe absence is where a child misses **50%** or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the Parents/Carers of children who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

We monitor attendance daily and use these procedures for following up absence:

- When a child is absent, the parent/carer should inform the school on the morning of the first day of absence.
- The detail of the absence is recorded with the relevant code on the SIMS system.
- Parents/Carers are expected to contact the school as soon as possible. If a child is absent and the Parents/Carers have not contacted the school by 9.30am, the Parents/Carers Advisor will check with the class teacher to make sure the child has not been missed off the register.
- If there is not considered a safeguarding issue around the child, the Parents/Carers Advisor will ring and if appropriate, her and the Head Teacher or member of the SLT will carry out a home visit.
- If there has been no response after three days, another home visit to the child's home to find out the reason for absence and why the parent/carer has not contacted the school.
- If there is considered a risk, the Head Teacher may contact Children Services or other professionals to seek further advice.
- Where a child returns to school with no explanation of his/her absence, families will be asked as to the reason for absence.

- Any information passed to the class teacher will be passed onto the Head Teacher. Likewise the class teacher will be informed as to why a child is absent.
- If a child fails to attend school for **ten** consecutive days and we are unable to contact the Parents/Carers via phone, email or a home visit the Head Teacher will follow the Local Authority's Children Missing Education procedure
- The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a child's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the child will be classified as a persistent absentee.
- Child-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

### **Exclusion**

- Exclusion is very rare however, in the event that exclusion is necessary the LA guidelines will be used. If a lengthy period of exclusion is, required reintegration will be planned and monitored.

### **Transferring school or moving out of the area**

- If a child moves to another school, Parents/Carers should notify school with the name of the new school, contact is awaited from the new school and then the Head Teacher will confirm that the child will be taken off our school register and the child's records are sent on to the new school.
- If moving out of the area, Parents/Carers are required to supply school with their new address and name of the new school they will apply to.
- If a child leaves the school without informing us, after two week's absence, if we are still unable to contact the Parents/Carers the school will follow the Local Authority Children Missing Education procedures. If there are concerns this will followed sooner.
- Parents/Carers moving their child to another school or leaving to go to another country will be requested to complete a School exit form, which will ask for a forwarding address and the address of new school, if known on the form.

### **Early Years**

- It is important that good practices are developed at an early stage and, as a school, we would encourage families where their child has been offered a preschool place to ensure their children attend on a regular basis. Those who do not attend on a regular basis could be at risk of losing their place.

### **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour policy

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and on a regular basis where appropriate. At every review, the policy will be shared with all staff and be approved by the Full Governing Board (FGB).



## 10. Other contacts

### National contacts

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) School attendance, absence and your child

[www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport) Behaviour and attendance - Parental responsibility

[familylives.org.uk](http://familylives.org.uk) Truancy Helpline: 0808 800 2222

### Local contacts

[www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk) Schools – Attendance

You can phone the Attendance Service on 0191 277 4500 or

Email [accessandinclusion@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:accessandinclusion@newcastle.gov.uk) **If you require this information in audio, Braille or large print, please contact the Access and Inclusion Team to arrange.**

Date to be implemented	September 2022
Date of next review	August 2024

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Child is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Child is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Child arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Child is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Child is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Child has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Child is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Child is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Child is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Child has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Child has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Child has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a Child will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Child is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Child is taking part in a day of religious observance

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 Child is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Child from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Child is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Child is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for Child's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Child arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Child of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or Child is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Child not on admission register	Register set up but Child has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day