

MOTTRAM ST. ANDREW PRIMARY ACADEMY



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Education is important for every child and regular school attendance is essential to ensure continuity and progression in learning. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

This policy is applicable for all children from Reception to Year 6.

The Importance of Good Attendance

Staff consistently teach to an excellent standard, and we get through a lot of learning every single day. Learning is organised so that every lesson counts. If a child misses even one or two days of school, they may miss out on key learning which they need to catch up. The more they are absent from school the greater the impact on a child's learning.

- 98% attendance means that your child has missed 4 days in the school year
- 95% attendance means that your child has missed 10 days in the school year
- 90% attendance means that your child has missed 19 days in the school year
- 80% attendance means that your child has missed 38 days in the school year

We aim for children to have attendance of 96% or higher.

Registration and Punctuality

The register is taken at the start of both the morning and afternoon session. Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised, using compulsory register codes for the circumstances.

Morning registration period is 8.45 to 9am. All children should be in their classroom ready to learn by 9am. It is very difficult for children to make a positive start to their day if they arrive late. Children who arrive after 9am are recorded as late in the register.

Registers close at 9.30am. Children who arrive after 9.30am, without a valid reason, are recorded as having an unauthorised absence for that session. Even if the absence is authorised, arriving after 9.30am counts as an absence for that session.

Parents must sign in all children who arrive in school after 9am. Children must not come into school unaccompanied after 9am.

Reporting Absence

School must be informed, by 9.30am, of the reason for any absence. This can be done by:

- emailing office@mottramacademy.org.uk
- phoning school
- reporting on the School Spider App

Absences will be followed up with a telephone call if we have not been notified of the reason.

Illness

It can be difficult to decide whether or not children are well enough for school or are infectious. It is important that children are not kept at home unnecessarily, and the NHS has produced guidance to support parents in making that decision:

[Is my child too ill for school?](#)

If we have reason to believe that illness is being used to cover absence for another reason, for example, a holiday or a day out, then we may ask for medical evidence of the absence.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Wherever possible, we encourage parents to arrange these outside of school hours. However, we appreciate that this is not always possible, and will authorise absence in these circumstances. Please inform school as soon as possible before the absence.

Parents' Work Commitments

Parents are expected to organise their work commitments so that children can attend school. Absence for parents' work commitments will not usually be authorised and will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Holidays, Days Out and Family Celebrations

Parents have no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time. Absence for holidays, days out and family celebrations will not usually be authorised and will be recorded as unauthorised absence. The DfE states:

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

Working together to improve school attendance, DfE, August 2024

Requesting Authorised Leave of Absence for Exceptional Circumstances

If a parent wishes to make a request for authorised leave due to exceptional circumstances, then they must be submitted on the school leave of absence form:

[Website: Attendance – Leave of Absence Form](#)

This form must be completed at least two weeks in advance of the absence commencing.

We will not authorise any exceptional leave of absence during:

- Year 1: the period of the Phonic Screening Check
- Year 4: the period of the Multiplication Check Week
- Year 6: KS2 test week (SATs)

Absence in Year 6 can be even more detrimental than in other year groups and, therefore, we are very unlikely to authorise exceptional leave of absence for children in Year 6.

Absence during the first week of the academic year in September is unlikely to be authorised, as this period is especially important for children, as they settle into their new classes.

In line with the DfE guidance above, holidays, days out and family celebrations are very unlikely to be authorised.

Penalty Notices

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly at the school where they are registered. Parents are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered. Compulsory school age is from the term following a child's fifth birthday.

On the 19 August 2024, the new National Framework for Penalty Notices came into force.

If a child has 10 or more sessions (a session is half a day) of unauthorised absence a Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority. Please see further guidance on the Cheshire East Website:

[Actions we can take when children miss school](#)

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. Only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent/carer 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.

Penalty Notice Summary:

Penalty Notices will be issued for

Term time leave: Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days.

10 Sessions of Unauthorised absence in a rolling 10 week period: A Penalty Notices may be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absences in a 10 week period.

However, we retain the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below the above thresholds.

Per Parent/Per Child

Penalty Notice fines will continue to be issued per parent per child. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance the fine will be charged at:

£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of the issue, reducing to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

(Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Second Offence

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first penalty notice, for either term time leave or irregular attendance the second penalty notice will be charged at:

£160 if paid within 28 days. (Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Third Offence

On the third time that an offence is committed within 3 years of the first penalty notice for either a term time leave or irregular attendance a penalty notice will not be issued. The case may proceed to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of 'Failure to send a child to school' the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £1000 or legal proceedings under Section 444 (1a) can include a fine of up to £2500.

Monitoring Attendance

The attendance of all children is monitored on a termly basis, and termly reports are sent to parents detailing their child's attendance so far that year. Children whose attendance is a concern will be monitored more frequently.

Any attendance below 90% is recognised as Persistent Absence. If any child has attendance below this threshold, when monitoring reports are issued, then their parents will receive an additional letter drawing attention to this. Letters may also be sent at other points of the year. If attendance fails to improve, then parents will be invited to meet with the headteacher or other member of the senior leadership team, to offer support and identify improvements needed.

Attendance data is evaluated at least termly to identify any groups of pupils within school who might need additional support.

The Local Authority Attendance and Children Out of School Service

Colleagues from Cheshire East Attendance and Children Out of School Service provide guidance and advice as requested from school. The local authority is responsible for issuing Penalty Notices, issuing a Notice to Improve for attendance and for prosecution for failing to secure regular attendance at school.

Senior Attendance Champion

The headteacher, Miss J. Willerton, is the school's Senior Attendance Champion and can be contacted by email: jwillerton@motramacademy.org.uk. If parents need any support with attendance, then they can contact either their child's class teacher or the headteacher.

Promoting Good Attendance

The importance of good attendance is regularly promoted in the weekly newsletter, and termly attendance reports highlight good attendance. Class teachers promote the importance of attendance with their class, especially in Key Stage 2.