



**FAIRCHILDES  
ACADEMY  
COMMUNITY  
TRUST**

# **Monks Orchard Primary School**

## **Attendance Policy**

**Reviewed and agreed: October 2020**

**Review date: October 2022**

We believe that every child at Monks Orchard Primary School has a fundamental right to be educated, with good attendance and punctuality being the key to personal development, learning and achievement in all areas.

We will encourage and support parents/carers in ensuring their children maximise their educational opportunities through regular attendance, and that any difficulties that impact upon attendance are identified and acted upon promptly.

## **Expectations**

### **We expect that all pupils will:**

- Attend school regularly;
- Attend school punctually;
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day;

### **We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day to day responsibility for children and young people will:**

- Encourage regular attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day.
- Ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend.
- Contact the school on the first day of absence.
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

### **We expect that school staff, including the Attendance Officer, will:**

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children; provide a safe learning environment provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns.
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, twice daily.
- Record all reasons for absence in the register.
- Monitor every pupil's attendance.
- Contact parents as soon as possible when a child fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence.
- Inform the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of concerns.
- Make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the Local Authority's expectations with regard to regular school attendance.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).
- Keep a record of those who arrive late each day.
- Liaise closely with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) about children whose attendance/punctuality is a concern.

### **Head Teacher, Governors and Attendance Officer will:**

- Implement the attendance policy.
- Ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided.
- Initiate a scheme for contacting parents on the first day of absence.
- Ensure that key staff have timetabled periods for liaison and follow up work with EWO, and appropriate access to attendance data.
- Consult and liaise closely with EWO on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay.
- Work in close collaboration with EWO during their term/half termly register analysis.
- Set whole school attendance targets.
- Monitor and evaluate attendance with EWO.

## **School Procedures**

### **Children are expected to arrive at school on time**

The school gate is open from 8:30 am, though the playground will not be supervised by school staff at this time. A '5-minute warning,' whistle is blown at 8:45 am. Another whistle is blown at **8:50 am** and the school gates are closed. Children are expected to be in their class line, ready to start the day by this time. Lateness not only affects the learning of the pupil in question, but also affects the learning of others.

**Any child arriving after 8:50 am is recorded as late (L) in the register. Parents whose children arrive late must register their child using the computer in the school reception area, stating the child's name and reason for the late arrival.**

For safety reasons, if a child is late, parents/carers must accompany the child to the school office. The attendance and dinner registers are then amended with the child being marked present by the office staff.

If a child arrives after 9:30am, their arrival is recorded but they are given an unauthorised absence mark in the register (U).

**If a child is absent, parents are asked to telephone the school on the first day of absence** and send a note or explanation, when the child returns to school, so that the absence is not recorded as unauthorised. The school's telephone number is 020 8654 2570.

If we do not receive a telephone call or message on the first day of absence, we telephone the child's parent or carer to ask why the child is not in school. If we do not receive a reply, we send a letter to the child's home address. If we do not receive a reply to the letter within five days we notify our EWO who will carry out a home visit and ascertain if a referral to the local authority for a child missing in education needs to be made. If we have previous concerns about a child's welfare e.g. the child is on the child protection register or we believe could be in danger, we notify our EWO and/or the police or Social Services.

If a child is absent for more than 3 days due to a medical condition or illness, parents will be required to produce medical evidence.

**Persistent non-attendance**, where absences cannot be justified in law, will result in the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices in accordance with the Local Authority's penalty notice protocol under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and may be subject to a £60-£120 fine. In addition, the school will support the EWS in prosecutions brought under Section 444 Education Act 1996, or in applications in the Family Proceedings Court for Education Supervision Orders.

### **Parental requests for Leave of Absence during term time**

The taking of leave during school time is **not a right**. The school holiday dates are published well in advance and we therefore do not see any reason for parents to take their child/children out of school during term time.

The school will not authorise any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances *e.g. the death of a close family member or leave from the services*.

In the majority of cases, applications for leave in exceptional circumstances must be received by the school not less than 3 weeks before the intended period of leave.

Applications should be made to the Headteacher in writing using the form provided in the office. The law states that such requests are not an automatic right, should be kept to a minimum and must not exceed 10 days during a school year.

**Parents must wait for a response to their application before making arrangements for a leave of absence, and must not assume that it will be authorised.**

If leave is taken without authorisation, consideration will be given to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice to the sum of £60 to each parent.

## **Authorised absence**

- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

## **Unauthorised absence**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

## **Changing Schools**

If families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school, they must inform the Monks Orchard school office as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from our school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- The new home address, if it is known

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

## **Strategies for improving punctuality and attendance**

- Rewarding good attendance - each half term the class in Key Stage Two and Key Stage One with the best attendance record are awarded the Attendance Cup, to display in their classroom. This award entitles the pupils in that class to have a non-uniform day on a Friday of their choice.
- Pupils with 100% attendance receive an attendance certificate in Assembly at the end of each half term.
- Weekly late gate checks with the Education welfare officer.
- Letters sent out to parents/ carers to raise concerns about punctuality.
- Assemblies and workshops to raise awareness and address issues of punctuality and encourage improvement.

## **Penalty Fines (Croydon Local Authority)**

It is the Local Authority's policy that parents may receive a £60 penalty fine for:

1. irregular unauthorised attendance.
2. unauthorised holidays.
3. 8 late arrivals in a 6-week period. (after registration closes at 9.30am U).

In line with the Education Act 1996 student with persistent absences may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution.