



Pupil Attendance Policy

Approved: May 2016

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF INTENT

1.1 School regards regular attendance at school as essential to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all children and that regular attendance at school is necessary to promote better life chances. The school's ethos encourages children to feel that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late.

There is a clear link between good attendance and high standards. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

There is now more Government pressure on schools than ever before to ensure the regular attendance of children in their school. There is a legal requirement for schools to set targets for improving school attendance.

This policy sets out the principles and guidelines by which we seek to raise attendance, improve punctuality, to raise levels of achievement and to maximise opportunities both in school and in later life.

1.2 WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring every child's regular attendance at school is the parent's/carer's responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE and helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents details on attendance in our regular newsletters.
- Report to parent/carer's at least termly on their child's attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor whole school attendance continuously.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and prizes.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

3.0 UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

3.1 Every half day absence from school is classified by the school (not by the parents) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Absences for religious observance will also be authorised.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carer's keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

3.2 PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents/carer's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carer's will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are automatically made known to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Service and the Pyramid Education Social Worker.

4.0 ABSENCE PROCEDURES

4.1 If a child is absent parents/carer's must:

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – parents/carers should do this even if they have already telephoned us;
- Or parents/carers can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with them.

4.2 If a child is absent school will:

- Telephone parents/carer's on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them.
- Invite parents/carers in to school to discuss the situation with our Attendance Worker/Education Social Worker and/or Headteacher if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Service; if attendance falls below 90%.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

There are times when we need to contact parents/carer's about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have contact numbers at all times. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

5.0 LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher, getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

- Children will receive a late mark if they are not in class by the end of registration.
- All children arriving after registration period will be entered into the "late book" in the office. The reason for lateness is also recorded.

If a child has a persistent late record parents/carer's will be asked to meet with the Attendance Worker/Learning Mentor or the Head Teacher to resolve the problem, but parents/carer's can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting children to school on time.

6.0 HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in term time. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

The law states that 10 days in a school year may be granted under certain circumstances but this is always at the head teacher's discretion.

Parents/carers wishing to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time must complete the **Leave of Absence Request Form** and return to the Headteacher **before** booking the holiday. The form is available from the school office.

At Mount Pleasant holidays will not be automatically granted and parents requesting holiday will be invited into school for a meeting with the Head Teacher.

Parents/carers must understand that by taking children out of school they are making a choice to miss out on part of their child's education.

If parents/carers take their child out of school and the leave has not been authorised by the Headteacher they may be fined £60.00 if paid within 28 days, rising to £120.00 if paid within 42 days. This is per parent and per child. Alternatively, the Local Authority may take legal action against you for the non-attendance of your child where the maximum penalty for an offence is £2500.

7.0 ATTENDANCE AND PUPIL SUPPORT SERVICE

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problem together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer from the Local Authority. He/She will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents/carers or children may wish to contact the APS themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

8.0 SUMMARY

The school has a 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 regularly. All school staff are committed to working in partnership with parents, children and families to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Leave of Absence Request Form

This form has been designed to clarify the process of leave of absence requests. The school is expected to comply with Government guidance by the DfE (Department for Education), and the LEA (Local Education Authority)

Pupil Name			
Date of birth			
Any other school age children?	Name	School	
	Name	School	
Dates of travel			
Total amount of days absent from school			
Does the absence overlap with beginning or end of term?	YES: <input type="checkbox"/>	NO: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Please state the reason for your absence			
The following questions are outlined within the DfE expectations			Yes No
<i>Is the request due to 'special' circumstances, such as:</i> Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking leave outside term-time if the absence will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education; and			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
A family needing to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis. If yes, please give details:			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Each request can only be judged on a case by case basis, you will receive a reply from the school in writing.

Person submitting application:

Relationship to child:

Signature:

Date:

Our Ref: NN/TJK/Whole School Letter A

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian

RE: FAST TRACK TO ATTENDANCE

We are writing to **all** parents and carers of pupils at Mount Pleasant Primary School to remind you of the importance of regular school attendance. We feel sure that you want your child(**ren**) to do well at school. A pupil with 90% attendance misses the equivalent of half a day schooling each week.

Research shows that children who are not in school regularly and on time are most vulnerable, academically disadvantaged and easily disaffected.

The Attendance and Pupil Support Service meets regularly with school staff to discuss ways of improving the attendance and achievement of pupils. With your help we aim to make good attendance a priority for all pupils. We expect your child to achieve at least 96% overall attendance target throughout their school life.

In line with government guidance; this year we are working in a different way. This involves setting targets for improved attendance. Where targets are not met, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting or attendance panel to discuss these attendance difficulties and find ways of working together with school and the Education Social Work Service to overcome them. New targets will then be set.

Our aim is to work in partnership with parents to resolve any problem relating to attendance, we do have the powers to bring cases before the Magistrates Court or issue a Fixed Penalty Notice if unauthorised absence persists.

If you would like to discuss this initiative further or would like support from the Attendance and Pupil Support Service to help you improve your child's school attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs N Nazir
Acting Head Teacher

Our Ref: NN/TJK/Whole School Letter B

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian

RE: FAST TRACK TO ATTENDANCE

We are writing to **all** parents and carers of pupils at Mount Pleasant J&I N School to remind you of the importance of regular school attendance.

Over the last school year there have been a number of parents who have taken their children out of school for extended holidays in term time. This has resulted in the school being criticised in the recent Ofsted Report as attendance is lower than it should be.

We feel sure that you want your child(**ren**) to do well at school. Taking a holiday in term time means that children miss important school time – both educationally and for other school activities. It will be difficult for them to catch up on work later on.

Research has shown that in primary schools less than 65% of children get good results in Maths and English with an average of 15 days absence; compared to around 90% where the average is less than 8 days.

Parents do not have a legal right to take their children out of school for holidays; you should not expect your child's school to agree to an absence for a holiday in term time. Taking your child out of school without permission may result in a Penalty Notice being issued.

We are committed to working in partnership with children and families to provide the best education possible for your child. We are counting on your support in this matter.

Yours faithfully

Mrs N Nazir
Acting Head Teacher

Our Ref: NN/TJK/Whole School Letter C (Early Years)

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian

RE: FAST TRACK TO ATTENDANCE

We are writing to **all** parents and carers of children in Early Years Education at Mount Pleasant JI&N School to remind you of the importance of regular attendance in school.

Evidence shows that children who regularly attend Early Years Education will be educationally and socially ahead of other children throughout their primary education.

Due to the demand for places in Early Years, children who do not attend regularly may be taken off the school register and their place given to another child on the waiting list.

If you require support in this matter please contact the school.

Yours faithfully

Mrs N Nazir
Acting Head Teacher

Our Ref: NN/TJK/Fast Track Letter1

Date

The Parent/Guardian of
(Address)

Dear Parent/Guardian

RE: (CHILD'S NAME) FAST TRACK TO ATTENDANCE

I am the Attendance Officer at Mount Pleasant JI&N School. I work at the school to support the children and families to improve school attendance.

I regularly meet with the Attendance & Pupil Support Officer from Kirklees to discuss ways of improving the attendance and achievement of pupils. With your help we aim to make good attendance a priority for all pupils. We expect, in line with Government expectations for your child to achieve at least 96% overall attendance target throughout their school life.

Following an attendance meeting in school it has been noticed that your child's attendance has fallen below a satisfactory level. Please find enclosed a copy of the attendance summary for your attention.

We are sure that as a caring and responsible parent you will share the importance with the school on the need for regular and punctual school attendance. This is essential to ensure your child receives the full benefit of **(his/her)** education to which **(name)** is entitled to.

I will now be monitoring **(name)** school attendance over the next 4 school weeks; I expect that they will meet the target of 96% attendance. Should you require support in this matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Tracey Kershaw
Attendance Officer

Our Ref: NN/TJK/Fast Track Letter2a

Date

The Parent/Guardian of
(Address)

Dear Parent/Guardian

RE: (CHILD'S NAME) FAST TRACK TO ATTENDANCE

I wrote to you on **(date)** explaining my concerns about your child's attendance. You were informed of the level of your child's attendance at that date and set the target attendance of 96%.

I have now reviewed your child's attendance for that period and are disappointed to find that the target has not been achieved.

Over the last 4 week monitoring period your child achieved () % attendance.

Whilst our aim is to work in partnership with parents to resolve any problems relating to attendance we do have the powers to bring cases before the Magistrates Court or issue a Fixed Penalty Notice if unauthorised absence persists. Please see attached leaflet.

I will continue to monitor **(names)** attendance for the next 4 school weeks; we expect that your child should achieve a minimum of 96% attendance. If your child's attendance does not significantly improve you will be asked to attend an Attendance Meeting in school to discuss the reasons for non-attendance.

Should you require support in this matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Tracey Kershaw
Attendance Officer

Our Ref: NN/TJK/Fast Track Letter2b

Date

The Parent/Guardian of
(Address)

Dear Parent/Guardian

RE: (CHILD'S NAME) FAST TRACK TO ATTENDANCE

I wrote to you on **(date)** explaining our concerns about your child's attendance at **(school)**. You were informed of the level of your child's attendance at that date and set the target attendance of 96%.

I have now reviewed your child's attendance for that period. It has been noted that your child's attendance has greatly improved. Over the monitoring period your child achieved () % attendance.

I am sure that as a caring and responsible parent you will share the importance with the school on the need for regular and punctual school attendance. This is essential to ensure your child receives the full benefit of **(his/her)** education to which **(name)** is entitled.

I will continue to monitor **(names)** attendance; it is expected that this will continue to improve. Should you require support in this matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Tracey Kershaw
Attendance Officer

Our Ref: NN/TJK/Fast Track Letter3

Date

The Parent/Guardian of
(Address)

Dear Parent/Guardian

RE: (CHILD'S NAME) FAST TRACK TO ATTENDANCE

I last wrote to you on **(date)** explaining our concerns about your child's attendance. You were informed of the level of your child's attendance at that date and a target for attendance was set.

I have now reviewed your child's attendance for that period and are disappointed to find that the target has not been achieved. The staff at **(school)** and the Attendance and Pupil Support Service are committed to raising the attendance and attainment of all students. We need your help to achieve the best for your child.

This letter is to invite you to an Attendance Meeting on **(date)** at Mount Pleasant.

Our aim will be to identify reasons for your child's non attendance, resolve any problems and reset a target for a further four week period. Failure to reach this target could result in a Penalty Notice being issued or prosecution under the 1996 Education Act.

It is of vital importance that you attend this appointment. Your child will be expected to attend school. It may be appropriate to include your child at some point at the panel, in which case they will be contacted by a member of school staff.

If this date or time is not convenient please contact me to re-arrange.

Yours Sincerely

Tracey Kershaw
Attendance Officer

Our Ref: NN/TJK/Fast Track Letter4

Date

The Parent/Guardian of
(Address)

Dear Parent/Guardian

RE: (CHILD'S NAME) FAST TRACK TO ATTENDANCE

You may remember that you were invited to a meeting at Mount Pleasant JI&N School on **(date)** which you failed to attend. This meeting was to enable us to discuss concerns in regard to your **childs(rens)** school attendance.

In your absence a further 4 week monitoring period was set **(dates)**

It is expected that your child will achieve a minimum of 96% attendance over this period.

I must emphasise to you that you have a legal responsibility to ensure that **(child)** attends regular education; failure to do so can lead to a Penalty Notice Fine being issued which could be as much as £100 per child, per parent. You could also face court proceedings if you fail to pay the fine.

If your child is absent from school for a valid reason you must contact the school immediately to let them know why they are absent and how long they will be absent from school.

Yours faithfully

Tracey Kershaw
Attendance Officer