

Manor Farm Community Infant School



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

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Signed by:

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September 2025

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1. Introduction

Manor Farm Community Infant School is committed to creating a learning environment which encourages and supports high levels of achievement for all pupils. An essential part of striving for excellence is achieved through regular attendance and punctuality. In addition to learning valuable life skills, pupils absent from school miss out on important teaching and learning that can never be retrieved. Therefore, we expect the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved and are proactive in challenging poor attendance and punctuality.

0 days absent	100%	Perfection
Equates to 2 days off school each year	99%	Excellent
Equates to 5 days off school each year	97%	Good
Equates to 10 days off school each year	95%	Sight Concern
Equates to 20 days off school each year	90%	Concerned
Equates to 30 days off school each year	85%	Very Concerned

2. Department for Education (DfE) Guidance

‘Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing school leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school’.

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

The government expects parents and guardians to:

- To perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DfE July 2019

3. Our Expectations

All members of our school community must strive to create a culture in which students come to school every day (without question), to enjoy their schooling and leave with a sense of achievement. At Manor Farm Community Infant School our minimum expectations are:

- Attendance is 97.5%
- Punctuality 97.5%

However, we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

4. Aims of policy

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communications about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.

5. Rights & Responsibilities for Attendance

There are legal obligations on:

- Parents to secure education for their child(ren) and to send them to school.
- The school to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school.

5.1 Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher

The role of the Headteacher is:

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of this policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Buckinghamshire Council's policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Buckinghamshire Council's policies and procedures.
- To take responsibility for attendance and punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquiries.
- To oversee the analysis of half termly / termly/ yearly data and respond to findings.
- To liaise with external agencies such as Buckinghamshire Council's attendance team and make referrals, where necessary.

- To write to parents to inform them when their child's attendance is below 96%.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- To work with teachers to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend this policy, as required.

5.2 Office Staff

The role of the Office Staff is:

- To record the precise reasons for absence and update class registers on Arbor, when informed.
- To check the school phone and take messages from parent/carers about pupil absence.
- To promptly inform the Headteacher if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality.
- To monitor persistent absentees and meet weekly with the Headteacher to discuss findings.
- To implement the daily checking of registers after morning and afternoon registration, including contacting parents when the registers close at 8.55am and no reason has been given for absence.
- To report concerns to the Local Authority, as requested by the Headteacher.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.

5.3 Class teachers and Learning Support Assistants

The role of the class teachers and learning support assistants is:

- To take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done on Arbor at 8.50am and 1pm
- To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance/punctuality through Arbor.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are obtained and filed in the school office.
- To provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- To establish good and effective communication links with parents/ carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties.
- Alongside the Headteacher work with pupils and their families when attendance is a concern and work to overcome barriers to good attendance.
- To promptly inform the Headteacher of pupils who persist with poor attendance/punctuality.
- To feedback to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality concerns at Parents' Consultations and in yearly reports.

5.4 Parents / Guardians

The role of the parents/ guardian is:

- To ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- To promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform.
- Wherever possible, avoid medical and dental appointments in school time.
- Inform the school on each day of their child's absence. We may call you to ask for additional information.
- Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence and appropriate evidence as soon as their child returns to school.

6. Minor Illness

If a child has a minor illness (eg mild headache, stomach aches etc, without a temperature), parents should bring them into school and inform the school office who will pass on the information to the relevant staff to monitor during the day. Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents must do the following:

- Contact the school first thing in the morning (and any subsequent mornings) and state the exact reason why. This should be done calling 01494 814281.

7. Late Arrival

Registration begins at 8.45am and the register will close at 8.55am. Pupils arriving after this time up to 9.15am will be marked as present but having arrived late (L code).

On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be marked as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late after the registers close without a justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

8. Appointments

If pupils have a dental, health, clinic or hospital appointments, parents should let the school know at least **one week in advance** in writing, including a printout of the appointment details. Without such evidence, the absence will be marked as **unauthorised**. Parents should bring their child to school before / after appointments (as appropriate). Where possible we would prefer if all appointments were made outside of school hours.

9. County Attendance Team

Manor Farm Community Infant School works in partnership with the County Attendance Team to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school. This includes the Headteacher and appropriate staff meeting with the attendance officer for meetings to discuss and review attendance. The school and attendance officer work with identified pupils and their parents to

improve poor attendance. When the attendance does not improve sufficiently and after discussion with the attendance officer, the school may apply for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued, invite parents or guardians to a meeting (see Contract Meetings below) to offer support or may make a formal referral to the County Attendance Team.

10. Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

A penalty notice will be issued with regard to unauthorised absence if a pupil fails to attend school as required without a genuine explanation. A pupil's absence must have been unauthorised for at least **10** sessions (one session is half day either am or pm) in the previous and / o r current term.

11. National Thresholds

From September 2023, schools will need to consider a Penalty Notice if a pupil misses 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The 10 week period would start on the first day of unauthorised absence. Half of a day (am or pm) is considered a 'session'. The threshold of 10 sessions can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, for example, eight sessions of unauthorised holidays in term time and two sessions for other unauthorised reasons. The ten school week period may span different terms or school years, for example: 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 in the Autumn Term.

12. Penalty Notice

Under the new national framework, Fixed Penalty Notices will be considered when a child has missed ten or more sessions (five days) due to unauthorised absence in a period of ten school weeks.

Penalty Notices (fines) charged to parents is £80 if paid within 21 days) or £160 (if paid between 22-28 days).

Where a penalty notice is unpaid, legal action would be pursued. Under new framework, only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period. Where a second Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent for the same child, the charge will be £160.

Failure to pay the fine within 28 days will result in either a prosecution for the offence to which the notice applies, or withdrawal of the notice (limited circumstances apply). Prosecution will be taken by the County Attendance Team under the Education Act 1966, section 444.

The issuing of penalty notices will comply with the code of conduct and practice as determined by the County Attendance Team.

13. County Attendance Team

In line with Buckinghamshire Council Attendance Team's flowchart and the 2016 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, leave for pupils during term time is **not authorised under any circumstances**. The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the

child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/ children.

Headteachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional, for example:

- Death of parent / carer or sibling of the pupil;
- Life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil; and
- Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recover and medical evidence required).

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, not appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances, which have led you to request leave in term time for your child / children, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from the school office, website or the reach more parents app. The Headteacher will then decide, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for the child to be absent during term time.

14. Parenting Contracts & Penalty Notice for Irregular Attendance

Fixed Penalty Notices may also be issued for irregular attendance during the school year. In order to prevent this from occurring, the school will work with parents/ guardians and the County Attendance Team to draw up and agree a parenting contract to rapidly improve attendance. These contracts will be produced at a 'Parenting Contract Meeting', with a formal invite sent out at least 7 days in advance.

15. Monitoring & Recording Attendance & Punctuality

Class registers – these are recorded using Arbor. The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session.

Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times.

Morning Register – Class registers are open from 8.45am until 8.55am. At that point, the teacher submits their final register. After this, children must sign in at the office. Children arriving between 8.55am and 9.10am will be marked as late. If a child arrives after 9.10am, this will be marked as an unauthorised absence. Phone calls will be made to parents / guardians at 9.15am if a child is not in school by this point and the school has not been made aware of a reason for absence. Should no

contact to be made by 9.30am, members of staff may visit home to ensure that the child/ren are safe and to determine the exact reason for absence.

In exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher may keep registers open for longer eg poor weather conditions.

Afternoon Register – Registers must be submitted by staff straight after lunch, by 1.10pm, before afternoon lessons commence.

16. Attendance Communication

The school will send out regular communication, including phone calls and letters, regarding attendance and punctuality. This is to ensure that everyone is kept informed about attendance and punctuality at Manor Farm Community Infant School, especially those whose attendance or punctuality is causing concern.

Manor Farm Community Infant School works in partnership with the County Attendance Team to improve attendance.

17. Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Headteacher.

The success of this policy will be evaluated by considering feedback from pupils, teachers, support staff and parents. This policy will be reviewed through consultation with staff and revised every 2 years for the Local Governing Body to approve.

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