



MANBY LODGE INFANT SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The school staff, alongside Surrey Local Authority, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on 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 the children and young people will:

- Encourage regular school 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 daily whenever the child/children is/are unable to attend school;
- Contact the school on the first day of the child's absence by 9.30am by leaving a message on the school answerphone. Absences can also be emailed to secretary@manby-lodge.surrey.sch.uk;
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school;
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child;
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details.

We expect that school staff will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children;
- Provide a safe learning environment;
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's or parent's concerns

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils twice daily
- Monitor every pupil's attendance and punctuality
- Contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes from parents explaining the absence
- Encourage and celebrate good attendance
- Regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils
- Make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express the school's concern and clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service (EWS)

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil;
- Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity.
- Only the Head teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.
- It is expected that children will arrive at school on time. The school day begins at 8.50 am when the attendance register will be taken.
- The register will close at 9.00 am, and if a child arrives after 9.00 am a late mark will be given. If a pupil arrives after 9.20 am without a valid explanation it will be recorded 'as late after close of register' and counted as an unauthorised absence for that session.
- The pupil's name and the time of arrival will be recorded in the "Pupil Appointment/ In and Out" book in case of a fire/emergency.
- In cases of persistent late arrival to school, school will contact the parent/carer either by phone or letter to address the issue of lateness.
- Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

Pupil Leaving During the School Day

- During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.
- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return. Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site. If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted.

Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupils as a missing person.

Exceptional Leave of Absence Requests for leave of absence during term time

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are “exceptional circumstances”. The Head teacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if such leave is granted.

- No parent/carer can demand leave of absence during term-time for their child as a right and authorisation cannot be given retrospectively.
- Permission for absence during term time is at the school’s discretion and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- If a family needs to request absence in term-time then an Application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances must, wherever possible, be made at least two weeks prior to the leave date.
- Individual school procedures define the method for this application.
- The Head teacher, who may consult with the Chair of Governors, will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence requested.
- Each request will be considered separately and a decision made based on the reasons for each request.
- Family holidays - The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and are available from the school office and on the school’s website. Family holidays need to be booked within the school holiday dates. **Family holidays are not under most circumstances deemed exceptional circumstances.**

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice May be Issued

- A Penalty Notice can be issued in cases of **unauthorised** absence resulting in poor attendance and consideration will be given as to whether issue is likely to secure an improvement in attendance.
- Additionally, penalty notices will be issued for one off instances of absence taken in term time without school permission in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to **three per pupil per academic year**.
- If two penalty notices have been issued and paid in relation to a particular child, or there has been previous prosecutions, and poor attendance is an on-going problem, except in exceptional circumstances, information will then be gathered to support a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 rather than a further Penalty Notice being issued.
- In cases where families contain more than one poor-attending pupil, Penalty Notices may be issued to each parent for more than one child. This may not necessarily be simultaneously but the procedural timescales may overlap. Careful consideration will always be given to multiple issues within the same family.

The issuing of a Penalty Notice for poor attendance may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Unauthorised absences or late arrival after the close of registration, on 7 occasions in any six week period (not including school closures).
The liable parent/carer will receive a written warning from the Education Welfare Service of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 15 school days to effect an improvement. During this period the pupil is not expected to incur any further unauthorised absence. Where a formal warning letter has been issued to parents, the Local Authority will monitor the attendance for a maximum of 15 school days and issue a Penalty Notice by first class post if the Local Authority determine that an acceptable level of attendance has not been achieved
- Pupils, identified by Police and Education Welfare Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols, who have incurred unauthorised absence. The liable parent/carer will receive a written warning from the Education Welfare Service of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 15 school days to effect an improvement. During this period the pupil is not expected to incur any further unauthorised absence. Where a formal warning letter has been issued to parents, the Local Authority will monitor the attendance for a maximum of 15 school days and issue a Penalty Notice by first class post if the Local Authority determine that an acceptable level of attendance has not been achieved.
- When an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours within the first 5 school days of an exclusion without justifiable reason.
- No written warning will be given where it can be shown that the parent/carer had previously been warned of their liability to receive a Penalty Notice
- The issuing of a penalty notice for unauthorised leave of absence may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances :Unauthorised leave of absence in term time (5 days/10 sessions or more within a three month period, this need not be consecutive) without the authorisation of the school.
In the case of separated parents, the penalty notice will be sent to the parent requesting leave of absence and/or taking the pupil out of school.
- No written warning will be given where it can be shown that the parent/carer had previously been warned of their liability to receive a Penalty Notice.
- Where a Penalty Notice has not been paid, in accordance with The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and Department for Education guidance, the Local Authority is required to investigate the reasons for the absence and decide whether a prosecution is appropriate or withdraw the original Penalty Notice.
- **If a penalty notice is to be issued the procedures will be given to the parents**

Procedure for Withdrawing Penalty Notices

Once issued, a Penalty Notice will only be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- Proof has been established that the Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person
- The issue of the Penalty Notice did not conform to the terms of this Code of Conduct.
- In exceptional circumstances where the issue of a Penalty Notice is deemed inappropriate.

Payment of Penalty Notices

Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.

Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent/carer liability for the period in question and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered by the Penalty Notice.

Payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 calendar days is £60 and payment after this time but within 28 calendar days is £120.

The Local Authority retains any revenue from Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs (collection or prosecuting in the event of non-payment).

Non-Payment of Penalty Notices

Unless withdrawn, non-payment of a Penalty Notice will trigger the prosecution process under the provisions of Section 444 Education Act 1996.

The parent is not prosecuted for the non-payment of the Penalty Notice but for the offence to which the Penalty Notice relates.

The period of the offence will be defined as:

- (a) In the case of unauthorised leave of absence: (see section 3.7) the time the pupil was absent from school without authorisation.
- (b) In the case of poor attendance: up to 6 months prior to the issue of the summons.
- (c) In the case of a child being identified on a truancy patrol: up to 6 months prior to the issue of the summons.
- (d) In the case of exclusion: for any occasion when the child was seen in a public place without justification during school hours.

Unless withdrawn, non-payment of a Penalty Notice will trigger the prosecution process under the provisions of Section 444 Education Act 1996.

The parent is not prosecuted for the non-payment of the Penalty Notice but for the offence to which the Penalty Notice relates.

The period of the offence will be defined as:

- (e) In the case of unauthorised leave of absence: (see section 3.7) the time the pupil was absent from school without authorisation.
- (f) In the case of poor attendance: up to 6 months prior to the issue of the summons.
- (g) In the case of a child being identified on a truancy patrol: up to 6 months prior to the issue of the summons.
- (h) In the case of exclusion: for any occasion when the child was seen in a public place without justification during school hours.

Encouraging Attendance

Manby Lodge Infant School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- by responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils;
- by sharing and reviewing attendance statistics with the Governing Body
- celebrating good and improved attendance;
- by monitoring pupils' attendance and giving parents/carers information on their child's attendance figures. The school produces colour coded letters each term: Green is good attendance, amber highlights attendance needs improving and red indicates attendance level is poor and is a cause of concern.
- Meetings with parents will be arranged if necessary and a referral made to the Education Welfare Service if the irregular attendance continues.

Exclusions

- The subject of pupil exclusion will be dealt with in line with DfE and LA guidelines. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Management Policy.

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no email, note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 10.00 a.m. the school will endeavour to contact them that day by phone or email.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. If by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made, the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers and invite them into school to discuss their child's absence. The school will tell parents that if the absence persists a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Education Welfare Service may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform Manby Lodge school staff as soon as possible in writing. A pupil will not be removed from Manby Lodge 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 on 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 and Tracking Officer

School Organisation

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

In addition to this, the School has the following responsibilities:

Head Teacher and Governors with overall responsibility for attendance to:

- adopt the whole 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 if parents have not notified the school of the absence;
- ensure that appointments are made for liaison and follow-up work with the EWS and appropriate access to attendance data;
- consult and liaise closely with the EWS on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay;
- to work in close collaboration with the EWS during their termly/half termly register analysis;
- have an attendance award scheme with assemblies, certificates and rewards;
- monitor and evaluate attendance and lateness with the EWS.

Specific Duties for Class Teachers:

- to complete registers accurately and punctually twice daily;
- to initially help follow up any unexplained non-attendance;
- to inform the Head teacher of concerns;

- to be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to report these concerns as soon as possible to the Head.

Specific Duties for School Assistants:

- to check registers have been completed accurately and punctually;
- to record all reasons for absences in the register;
- to regularly produce attendance and lateness figures;
- to follow up absences when the school has not been informed;
- to notify the Head when unusual attendance patterns occur.
- to notify the Head when there is persistent lateness
- liaise with Education Welfare

Monitoring of Policy

This policy will be monitored by the Head teacher and the Children and Learning Committee

Reviewed by Children and Learning May 2018

Review date: Summer 2019