



## Attendance Policy 2022-2023



***At Two Mile Ash School, high standards of achievement, behaviour and respect for each other, underpin everything we do. Our teachers strive to create independent, articulate thinkers and learners who have the confidence to realise their ambitions. Our pupils are happy, highly engaged and thrive from a rich and vibrant curriculum. This drives us in our pursuit for achieving excellence every day.***

## Two Mile Ash School Attendance Policy

### *Principles*

Education is important. Missing school means missing out. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day that the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence on the part of the parent that can result in legal action.

High levels of attendance are crucial for so many areas of development and gives your child the best opportunities to achieve and progress to their maximum potential. It promotes not only their learning and educational abilities, but provides many life skills and long term positive work ethics. Children who have good levels of attendance are more likely to be able to progress socially, have enhanced self-esteem and confidence, develop time management skills, have a good understanding of expectations for future life and develop a respect for the importance of punctuality and attendance.

Importantly, the more time they are in school the more time they have for learning. Even a child with 90% attendance equals ½ day missed every week and over a school year that would equate to one month out of school, that means they are missing 100 lessons.

Any child can at times feel unhappy about attending school. Families may be going through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult. Any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties, are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child at an early stage. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that school attendance does not matter; it may even make things worse.

### **Definitions**

Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded by staff at the school as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Any information about the cause of each absence is always required, if possible in writing, evidence will be required to support some absences.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, such as illness or other unavoidable causes.

**Unauthorised absences** are those that the staff at school do not consider reasonable, or for which no 'leave' has been given. These are an offence on the part of the parent and include:

- Keeping children off school without a good reason
- Truancy from a whole session
- Absences that have never been clearly explained
- Children arriving at school too late to get a mark
- Taking holidays during term-time, this includes attending a family wedding.

## Parents and Carers' responsibilities

Parents and Carers are expected to contact school staff and to work with them in resolving any problems together.

The school will **not** be able to authorise absences for holidays, shopping, looking after other children or adults, birthdays, day trips etc. Leave may however, be granted in an emergency or exceptional circumstances, for example, for genuine pastoral reasons (e.g. after the death of close relative).

Parents are required to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school time wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, staff should be informed in advance and given evidence for this appointment (for example, a medical letter). A 'present' mark can still be awarded if the child attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole session.

## Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives and strategies

- Two Mile Ash School has a whole school attendance target of 97%.
- The class with the highest attendance in each year group will be acknowledged in celebration assembly and the class with the highest punctuality will be awarded a class point for the week. High levels of attendance will be celebrated by awarding certificates on a half-termly basis. These will be issued for 100% attendance and high attendance of 98 and 99%.
- Punctuality is monitored weekly and should a child be persistently late, parents/Carers will be contacted in the first instance by the class teacher to support punctuality.
- Punctuality will also be celebrated during celebration assembly with the 'Early Bird' Mascot.
- The children's half termly attendance will be recorded in their TMA Passport to Success.
- Attendance figures will be shared with parents on a half termly basis and a final attendance figure for the year will be included in the end of academic year report.

## Procedures

### Procedures if attendance falls below the school expectation.

If a child's attendance falls below 97%, the procedures are as follows:

#### Attendance Percentages below 97%

Parents are contacted by their child's class teacher and a conversation to discuss the decline in attendance will take place. Support will be offered to the family if required and appropriate. If the attendance continues to decline or remain below 97%, the Head of Year will contact parent/carers to discuss this further.

#### Attendance Percentages below 95%

Parents will be contacted by the Head of Year to discuss the decline in attendance and the offer of support from the school's Wellbeing Coach will be shared. If the attendance continues to decline or remain below 95%, the and link Senior Leader (SLT) to attendance will contact to discuss.

### Attendance Percentage below 90%

Parents will be invited into school by a member of the SLT to work collaboratively on creating an action plan, to discuss the situation in greater detail and medical records will be requested as appropriate.

If attendance percentage does not improve, parents will be invited to take part in an attendance panel held at the school. The attendance panel will include the Head or Senior Deputy Head, a member of the SLT and a school governor. All evidence of the individual situation will be reviewed and appropriate targets will be set. Regular weekly review meetings will be arranged.

If attendance does not rise, the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority, will be informed and it may be necessary to take further action.

School-age pupils are **persistent absentees** if they miss 10% of sessions or more. Therefore, any pupil with an attendance below 90% will be placed on the persistent absence register. The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of children attending school at this percentage and is required to make interventions to support families. These are called 'persistent absentees' by the Government, whatever the reason for their absence. Special procedures may be applied to children at risk of falling into this category.

### **Fixed Penalty Warnings/Notice**

A warning letter will be issued after ten unauthorised sessions have been recorded over a period of twelve weeks. The warning letter will be effective for twelve weeks and during this time it is an expectation that the child's attendance increases. After three weeks, the attendance will be reviewed. If there is no improvement to the attendance for that child, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued which will result in a fine of £60 or £120 if not paid within 28 days.

### **Procedures if your child is absent**

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

#### First day absence

Parent/ Carers are required to call in when their child is absent for any reason. If the school is not contacted, a call home will be made to ensure all children are accounted for.

#### If Your Child is Absent.

- Parent/ Carers are required to contact the school reception team on the day of the absence, informing them of the reason for absence and before the registration period at 8.40am.
- Each reason will be recorded on the child's registration document.
- The Parent/ Carers are required to contact the school EVERY day the child is absent.
- If Parent/ Carers do not contact the school and the school is unable to get hold of the child, the school will conduct a home visit to check the child is safe. If we are concerned for the child's safety, a referral will be made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or the police may be called.
- If the school are concerned about a 'Child Missing in Education' the procedures stated within Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

### **Procedures if a child is absent due to persistent illness.**

If a child is persistently ill, school will be able to provide support for the child and the family. Parent/Carers are required to contact the Head of Year or a member of the Strategic Leadership Team responsible for attendance to inform the school of medical appointments and if they are absent for long periods during serious illness. In this instance, the school will require written medical evidence, for example, letters or a doctor's visit.

#### Any planned absence from school, including holidays within term time.

Since September 2013, it has no longer been possible to authorise family holidays. Leave may only be granted for 'exceptional circumstances' and examples may include; visiting a new school, a recognised religious festival, a recognised sporting event, a funeral or taking an external exam.

For any requests for leave, parents are required to make an appointment to meet with the link SLT for attendance at the school PRIOR to the time of absence. Weekly attendance meetings are held and booked via reception and this is required for ANY requested leave. Any holidays taken without a meeting with the attendance office may result in a fine warning letter being sent home and logged on your child's school record.

Any holiday will be marked as unauthorised and will be recorded on the register. A fine warning letter will be issued and any subsequent holiday taken, will be issued with a fixed penalty notice, resulting in a fine of £60 per child per parent, which becomes £120 if not paid within the 28 days.

One day is authorised for a recognised religious event, but any other days taken before or after this day will be given an unauthorised holiday mark.

It is important to note that all holiday and fine warning letters will be chronologically recorded to support the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

#### **Punctuality**

It is imperative that children learn the importance of punctuality in order to fulfill their own role in society as they grow into young adults. This role modelling of good practice begins in primary school.

- Children are expected to arrive at school between 8.30 am and 8.40 am Year 3 8.45 and 8.55 to ensure the children are settled and ready to start their learning and receive their registration mark. Learning activities and some intervention groups occur during this time.
- The registration period runs until 8.50 am and registers are closed to enable lessons to start promptly by 9 am.
- A late mark is given to any child arriving after 8.50 am. 9.05 y3
- Lates are recorded in five minute intervals. If a child exceeds an accumulated 30 minutes late, parents will be contacted to discuss this and further support from the school is available. Intervention from school can sometimes be a welcomed helping hand for supporting the child with routines in the morning.
- If a child arrives after 9.10 am, they will be given an unauthorised mark.

#### **Absence**

Weekly monitoring by the class teacher of all absence ensures patterns are addressed quickly. Children with an attendance percentage of 90% or less are highlighted as red, those with an attendance percentage of 96%- 90% will be highlighted as yellow and those whose attendance percentage is 97% or more will be highlighted as green. This links to the same day phone calls where the class teacher will mark a child absent and record if they are currently highlighted as red. This information will inform the SLT and further action can then be triggered immediately.

Good attendance is at the heart of the school ethos and as a result, class teachers will discuss the importance of good attendance with the children in their class and during school assemblies.

### **Responsibility for Attendance**

Parent/Carers and all staff are ultimately responsible for attendance and punctuality matters. Others responsible within school for attendance include:

- Lucy Eldridge – Head of School
- Hayley Cook – Senior Deputy Head/Head of Safeguarding, Behaviour & Welfare
- Claire Hubbard – Attendance Officer
- Class teacher for children within their class
- Head of Years for children within their year group:
  - Year 3 – Mrs Cormack-Mattu
  - Year 4 – Mr Shirley
  - Year 5 – Miss Baldwin
  - Year 6 – Mr Ruffett

### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. School staff are committed to working closely with Parents/ Carers in the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

<p><b>Version:</b>                  V1 – Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020                  V2 – Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021                  V3 – Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022</p>	
<p><b>Approval:</b>                  This policy was ratified by Two Mile Ash Governing Body.</p>	<p><b>Next Review on or before:</b>  <b>September 2023</b>                  This policy will be reviewed annually by the Two Mile Ash Strategic Leadership Team and approved by the Governing Body at least on an annual basis (although amendments prior to this may occur to reflect the key changes and proposals within curriculum currently occurring)</p>