



## School Attendance Policy 2023-2024



***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.***

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## 1. 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  $\frac{1}{2}$  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 not advised 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.

There is strong evidence which shows that pupils' attainment, wellbeing, and wider development are secured by good attendance. The DfE has published statistics looking at the link between the attainment of pupils and different levels of absence across Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in state-funded mainstream schools and this has shown the link between school absence and lower attainment. A summary of headline information shows that:

- Pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment.
- Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% over the key stage, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.
- Generally, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage at KS2 and KS4, the lower the level of attainment at the end of the key stage.
- Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS2, 83.9% achieved the expected standard compared to 40.2% of pupils who were persistently absent.

## 2. Aims

At Two Mile Ash School, we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance

- › Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
  - › Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
  - › Acting early to address patterns of absence
  - › Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons

### 3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working Together to Improve School attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- › Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- › Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- › Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- › [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### 4. Roles and responsibilities

#### 4.1 The Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

#### 4.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

#### 4.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated Senior Leader is responsible

for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Senior Deputy Head Hayley Cook.

#### **4.4 The Attendance Officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Claire Hubbard and can be contacted on [reception@tma.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:reception@tma.bucks.sch.uk)

#### **4.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the Attendance Officer.

#### **4.6 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time
- › Contact the school on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence. Please advise when they are expected to return, informing them of the reason for absence. This needs to be done before the registration period of 8.40am (Year 4,5 & 6) or 8.55am (Year 3)
- › Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

#### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- › Present
- › Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- › Absent
- › Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- › The original entry
- › The amended entry
- › The reason for the amendment

- › The date on which the amendment was made
- › The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- › Whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

### **Year 3**

- The gate opens for Year 3 at 8.45am and closes at 8.55am. Registration begins at 8.55am and closes at 9.05am.
- A late mark is given to any child arriving after 9.05am
- 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 9.25 am, they will be given an unauthorised mark.

### **Years 4, 5 & 6**

- The gate opens for Year 4, 5 & 6 at 8.30am and closes at 8.40am. Registration begins at 8.40am and closes at 8.50am.
- A late mark is given to any child arriving after 8.50am
- 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.

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

Parent/carers must contact the school on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence. Please advise when they are expected to return, informing them of the reason for absence. This needs to be done before the registration period of 8.40am (Year 4,5 & 6) or 8.55am (Year 3).

Parent/carers are required to contact the school reception or leave a message on the school's absent line. Parents can also inform the school via the website of their child's absence on <https://www.tmaschool.com/contact/>.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### **4.4 Lateness and 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.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- If Parent/ carers do not contact the school and the school is unable to get hold of the parent/carer, 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.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

### **4.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

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.

## **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as visiting a new school, a recognised religious festival, a recognised sporting event, a funeral or taking an external exam.

Since September 2013, it has no longer been possible to authorise family holidays.



For any requests for leave, parents are required to make an appointment to meet with the senior designated senior lead for attendance, Hayley Cook, 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 may result in a fine warning letter being sent home and logged on your child's school record

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. One day will be authorised for a recognised religious event, but any other days taken before or after this day will be given an unauthorised holiday mark.
- External exam i.e. 11+ - One day will be authorised for the exam but any other days taken before or after this day will be given an unauthorised mark.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, Local Authority Officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- The class with the highest attendance in each year group will be acknowledged in celebration assembly with a class 'Attendance Rosette'
- The class with the highest attendance will be awarded a year group class point for the week.
- 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.
- The children's half termly attendance will be recorded in their TMA Passport to Success.
- At TMA, we value the relationships with our families and children and therefore will work in close collaboration to support families and children to be in school. We are committed to provide the right support and information to reduce anxiety and to address the concerns. Whatever the reasons for



concerns, all our schools will work closely in partnership with families and the children to fully explore their concerns and support all children attending school.

- Internal Early Help offered to families to support their child's attendance and punctuality such as Early Bird sessions.
- Working with external agencies and professionals effectively to support families in order to improve barriers to attendance.
- Half termly attendance reports issued to parents/carers

## 7. Procedures

Two Mile Ash School has a whole school attendance target of 97%. 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%

Parent/carers will receive a letter to inform them of their child's attendance decline. Parent/carers 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% (Persistent Absence)

Parent/carers will receive a letter to inform them of their child's attendance decline. Parent/carers in the first instance, will be contacted by a member of the SLT to work collaboratively, offer support, 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.

## 8. Attendance monitoring

### 8.1 Monitoring attendance

The School will:

- › Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- › Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### 8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- › Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- › Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### 8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- › Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- › Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### 8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- › Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- › Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## 9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, yearly by Hayley Cook, Senior Deputy Head. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Body.

## 10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- › Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- › Behaviour Policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-

		term/bank holiday/INSET day
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<p>Approval:</p> <p>This policy was ratified by the PATH Local Governing Body.</p>	<p>Next Review on or before:</p> <p>September 2024</p> <p>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>