



Attendance Policy 2025



Attendance Policy September 2025

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for managing attendance at May Bank Infants School.

It was produced through a process of consultation with the staff and Governors of May Bank Infants School and was first adopted by the Governing Body in 2006 and has been regularly reviewed by staff and Governors. This version reflects guidance from the Department for Education updated in August 2024 and applies from September 2024 'Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities'. This policy will be reviewed again in the academic year 2025-26.

This policy should be read in conjunction with a number of documents and policies including Behaviour and Discipline, Anti-Bullying, Inclusion and SEN, the SEN & Disability Act 2001, Disability, Equality Duty 2006, Equalities Policy, Safeguarding 2024.

Our Mission statement:

At May Bank Infants School we work towards:

"The whole and wholesome development of each child in a happy and caring learning environment."



Aims:

This policy outlines the school's aims to promote positive behaviour and excellent attendance, which is regarded as the responsibility of the whole school community.

It has the School's Mission Statement and Aims at its heart.

The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education

- The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.
- Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly.

Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. At May Bank Infants School we are committed to working together to ensure all pupils receive the best education possible

and to enable them to make progress and do as well as they can. For this to happen, children need to be in school to access the valuable teaching and learning opportunities.

This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the well-being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, and support for children with medical needs.

All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable and a reason why is provided.

School Responsibilities:

We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through the use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately.

We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives from the Local Support Team, Social Workers and Education Welfare Officers as required, in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. When a child's attendance falls below 95%, we will inform the family and where necessary work with the family to put a plan in place in order to address barriers and improve attendance.

We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority.
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
 - Policies are applied consistently and that support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources.
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but supports pupils' individual needs.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs.

- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance.
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance.
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues.
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers.
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The named safeguarding governor will:

- Meet with the headteacher every term.
- Monitor attendance data for the whole school and emerging patterns for groups of children or individuals.

The headteacher, who is also the designated person with responsibility for attendance, is responsible for:

- The 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, or authorising the school office manager to be able to do so.
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers.
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.
- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed.

- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

Class staff are responsible for:

- Recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, and submitting this information to the school office.
- Contributing to and supporting the continued development of the warm, welcoming, exciting and safe environment for all children.
- Welcoming each child into the class.
- Promoting and rewarding good attendance at all opportunities.
- Being aware of the absences of each child or patterns in absence in their group and supporting children to catch up missed work.
- Communicating with colleagues where necessary if there are any issues resulting from the absence that other staff should know (concern about work missed, response of other children, possible responses of colleagues) but also where there are possible safeguarding concerns reporting to the school's DSL.
- Notifying the Headteacher if there is any suggestion of term time holiday.

Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system using the correct register codes.
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the headteacher, SENCO, Key Stage lead where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Notify the DSL if there are any contextual safeguarding issues which might explain erratic or poor attendance.
- Contribute to and support the continued development of the warm, welcoming, exciting and safe environment for all children.
- Greet the children by name and make a special effort to provide a warm welcome to children returning with anxiety issues. If necessary, walk the child to the lesson/assembly etc.
- Reassure families that the school will monitor the child's welfare carefully during the course of the day and communicate with the family if there are any issues.

Parents or Carers Responsibilities:

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly. Parents will inform school straight away, if their child cannot attend and give the reason. Parents should try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside of the school day where possible. Parents should seek advice from medical professionals if they are not sure how long to keep their child off school with an illness.

Parents should ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their child's attendance. Parents should talk to their child about school and let the school know if their child is worried about anything. Parents should encourage good routines at home, which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep. Parents should encourage their child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

Parents should ensure school has all up to date contact details.

Parents should not book holidays in term time – holidays may only be authorised in exceptional circumstances as set out by the Department for Education.

Parents should seek support from the school if issues arise which may affect their child's attendance and parents should engage fully with support offered.

The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:

The Department of Education has published research into the effect that missing time from school can have on chances of succeeding in tests and exams ([February 22nd 2015 Department of Education](#)). The research is based on data from all schools in England going back several years. The results are very clear – missing even small amounts of time from school can have a significant effect on achievement.

Regular attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

Admissions Register:

School keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school. All schools must inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

All schools must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years.

Elective Home Education:

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority via Entrust at electivehomeeducation@staffordshire.gov.uk of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

Attendance data and targets:

The Local Authority does not prescribe individual school targets for attendance or persistent absence.

Our school attendance target is 97%

Procedures

- The school day starts at 8:45am and finishes at 3:15pm
- Children should arrive on time for the start of the school day. The school gates open at 8:35am.
- The school gates lock at 8:55am which gives parents on site sufficient time to drop off at multiple classes and leave the premises.
- Children arriving after 8:50am must report directly to the school office.
- Children arriving after 9:00am are recorded as 'late' in the school register and parents will be asked to provide a reason for the lateness. Parents will be required to fill in a late slip if their child arrives after 9:00am. If a parent refuses, the school will complete this to record the late arrival.
- Registration Closes at 9:15am. Children arriving later than 9:15am will then have the session recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Regular late arrival at school, which has not been resolved satisfactorily, will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. It is important that the school office or Headteacher are made aware of any mitigating circumstances, as soon as possible so that the school may offer appropriate support.
- Absences should be reported to the school office on 01782 898005 (answerphone if outside of office hour) or via email at office@maybank.staffs.sch.uk
- Parents should contact Mrs Bagshaw (Headteacher) for support on attendance.
- Parents and Guardians are required to inform the school concerning a pupil's unexpected absence as soon as possible, and at the latest by 9.30a.m. on the first day of absence.
- If a pupil is absent for registration and no notification has been received, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or guardian for information. If the first contact is unavailable, we will then contact the other contacts on the list.
- A procedure exists in school for recording reasons for absence.
- A record will be kept in the school office of any absences telephoned through. These will also be passed on to the relevant class teacher.
- A record is kept in the office of children who have to go home during the course of the day.
- Parents and Guardians should inform the school office concerning any medical or dental appointments or absence for religious observances that need to be held during school time. Proof of appointment will be required.

- When an individual pupil's attendance level falls without good reason, school will work with the family to put a plan in place to improve attendance. However, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service if little or no improvement to attendance is seen. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

Monitoring attendance

The school monitors all children's attendance and informs parents of their child's attendance during the year via written reports using the following colour coded system. Attendance is monitored regularly and a letter sent home to inform parents if their child's level of attendance begins to fall below the expected levels.

90% or below	90.1% - 95.9%	96% - 100%
Persistent absence Missing the equivalent of at least 4 weeks of learning in the school year. Attendance plan must be put in place.	Improvement needed Missing the equivalent of at least 2 weeks learning in the school year.	Expected attendance Absent for less than 2 weeks and possibly in school for every day of learning.

School also contact parents if a child's attendance is 90% or below during the year. The school will put a plan where attendance falls below 90% to support families to improve their child's attendance.

The Head Teacher is not able to authorise term time holidays except for in exceptional circumstances.

Penalty Notices and 'notice to improve'

In February 2024, the Department for Education published Working Together to Improve School Attendance. Within this document, in Chapter 6, it lays out the changes to issuing penalty notices. The changes to the law were introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 and will come into effect from 19 August 2024. This means that any unauthorised leave taken after this date will be dealt with under the new Regulations.

In line with government guidance from the Department for Education 'Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities' which was updated in August 2024 to address poor attendance and unauthorised absences from school, the local authority may decide to issue a Fixed Penalty fine and/or prosecute parents under the Education Act 1996 if a holiday is taken during term time. Parents should be aware of the Local Authority Fixed Penalty Protocol as a parental measure to improve pupil attendance in accordance with the Department of Education School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures Statutory Guidance January 2015.

In line with Government legislation, parents must complete a leave of absence request form if they want to take their child out of school for any reason other than medical reasons. Any request made because of exceptional circumstances can only be judged

on a case-by-case basis taking into account individual circumstances. Requests should be made in writing **at least 28 days before the period of requested absence**. The form is available from the school office.

If no holiday request form has been completed and submitted, the absence would automatically be recorded as unauthorised. If we become aware of a suspected holiday without a leave of absence request form being completed, this must also be referred by the school to the local authority which may result in a prosecution for unauthorised absence.

Penalty notices are fines imposed on parents by the local authority. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalties can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school. The penalty is £160 (per child, per parent), reduced to £80 (per child, per parent), if paid within 21 days of receipt. The payment is paid direct to the local authority, not the school. The issuing of a penalty notice will trigger the beginning of a 3 year window, during which the local authority will monitor further unauthorised absences of your child. A second offence resulting in a referral to the local authority for an authorised leave of absence a penalty notice within this 3 year period would result in a penalty of £160 (per child, per parent), with no reduction for early payment. A third penalty notice cannot be issued within the three-year period; therefore, the county council will deal with any further unauthorised leave through prosecution in the Magistrates Court. If the parent is found guilty, the potential fine is up to £1000. The three-year rolling period starts when the first penalty notice is issued after the 19th August 2024.

The new national threshold for issuing penalty notices has been set at 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Therefore, Staffordshire Council will expect **schools to notify them of all unauthorised leave in term time that meets the threshold of 5 school days (these days do not need to be consecutive).**

There is no requirement for attendance to be below a particular percentage before a Penalty Notice can be issued.

Parents can now receive more than one Penalty Notice per academic year.

Parents may be issued with 'notice to improve', where they are informed that this is their last opportunity to engage with school and improve their child's attendance before a fine is issued. Parents will now only receive one warning notice period for improvement in attendance in a single academic year. If attendance deteriorates again then no formal warning notice will be issued and the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory actions if unauthorised absence re-occurs.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the local authority will oversee the case and either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

The Local Authority will continue to monitor all unauthorised absences from school and support head teachers in challenging parents who fail to meet their legal obligations.

In addition to using these powers, local authorities and schools can develop other practices to improve attendance.

Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness

From 19th August 2024, any period of unauthorised leave may result in a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. The headteacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence may be referred by the head teacher to the local authority, when the threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions (ie one session being a morning or afternoon therefore 1 day is two sessions) of absence has been met within a ten week rolling period. If a child has regular periods of unauthorised absence (for example being absent for 4 sessions every 15 weeks) this could also result in a penalty notice. If a child is persistently late resulting in an unauthorised absence (ie arriving at school after 9.15 am) this may also result in a penalty notice being issued.

Unauthorised absences can include holidays, lateness after registration has closed or not otherwise reporting a child's absence from school or a combination of these.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs Bagshaw (Headteacher) is the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school. The Administrative Assistant, Office Manager and Headteacher manage the attendance registers and liaise with the Education Welfare Officer, although all staff are vigilant in reporting absences and asking for information concerning the children in their class.

As part of our Safeguarding Duty, the Administrative Assistant or Office Manager will contact parents who have not previously informed the school about their child's absence by 9.30am on the first day of absence. Parents are encouraged to phone the school each day regularly to update the school as to the child's condition.

The school regularly monitors and analyses attendance data to ensure appropriate action is in place to encourage good punctuality and attendance for all pupils including vulnerable groups.

The Headteacher reports to Governors termly regarding school attendance data. The policy and procedures are reviewed at least annually.

The school works closely with other agencies. The Local Authority must be informed of the absence of any child for a continuous period of 10 days or more without school's permission but school should involve the Local Support Team and take due regard of safeguarding procedures where absence of a particular child is less than 10 days but presents a cause for concern.

The school shares information with other agencies where concerns exist regarding a child's attendance. The school work in line with the Local Authority policies and follow their guidelines and processes for attendance.

Attendance at school is extremely important and being regularly absent will affect your child's ability to learn and do well.

Legal Framework :

The Education Act 1996;
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011 and 2013
The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;
The Education Act 2002; and The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011;
Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;
The Education Act 2005;
The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;
The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments; and
The Education and Skills Act 2008.
The Equality Act 2010

Appendices:

Staffordshire Code of Conduct for Issuing Fixed penalty notices
Department for Education Guidance –Pupil Attendance including use of national codes to record attendance or reasons for absence in registers

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and the local authority to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Signed (Chair of Governors): *R. Smith*

Date: 30.09.25

Signed (Headteacher): *V. Bagshaw*

Date: 30.09.25