



## **Excalibur Academies Trust**

May Park Primary School

Attendance Policy

Date of approval:  
09.11.2022

Approved by: V  
Spence (Principal)

Review date:  
09.11.2023



**Key contacts:**

- Miss Kirsten Parton, Assistant Vice Principal, is the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance.
- Miss Polly Stokes, Attendance Manager, or Class teachers are available to discuss attendance concerns on a day-to-day basis. Contact can be made via the school office or class dojo.
- Miss Stokes and Miss Parton can be contacted if more focussed support for attendance is required. Contact can be made via the school office or Class Dojo.
- Miss Brooks, Admissions and Attendance Administration Assistant, is the point of contact in the Main Office.
- The Academy Committee member that supports with this policy is Cashan Campbell.
- **Parents/Carers must telephone school on the morning of the first and each subsequent day of absence before 8.30am (0117 903 0075)**



## Part 1 Policy:

### Rationale:

- Good attendance and punctuality directly impacts upon pupils life chances and the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils.
- There is evidence that if a pupil's attendance is below 92% at Primary school, then they achieve one level lower in SATS. 90% attendance equates to missing 4 weeks of school. The equivalent of 100 hours of learning missed.
- It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Therefore, the school will encourage parents of Nursery children, and Reception children who are not yet compulsory school age, to send their children to every session that is available to them.

### Aims:

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time, efficient education to which they are entitled; acting early to address patterns of absence and creating a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood and valued by all parties.

This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, taking into account the individual needs of our pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Therefore, in the development of our policy we have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the child.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Ensure pupils enjoy their learning, experience success, and realise their full potential.
- Support pupils to understand the importance and impact of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that good attendance and punctuality is a priority for all involved in the school community.
- Provide guidance, support and advice to parents/carers, pupils and staff.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers, pupils, staff and other agencies as relevant.
- Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.



If the child is unable to attend school for any reason, the school should inform school of the reason on the first day of the absence. If the school is concerned about a pupil's attendance for any reason, we will contact the parent to discuss the matter, in the first instance.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly.

### Effects of non-attendance

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days absence can result in pupils missing a significant number of lessons.

Attendance during school year	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Approximate number of lessons missed
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons

### Safeguarding and Attendance

May Park Primary School monitors trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2022 version, or as updated by the DfE) we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare. (Please refer to MPPS safeguarding policy for more information)

### Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the government guidance 2022 [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's 2015 statutory guidance on [School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures](#). These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

The DfE's guidance on the [school census](#) explains the persistent absence threshold.



## Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

The school will ensure that data is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any pupil becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include: identifying the individual needs of pupils; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance; and where a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority is required in line with the DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#).

## Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing and enhance their understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

We will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers these pupils face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

Reduced timetable will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period to support pupils to reintegrate back into education to access fulltime provision.

The school is committed to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

## Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers



- the school/trusts' strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance,
- and the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it.

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include

- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data, and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

## **Part 2 What the Law Says and Our School Procedures:**

### **Contents of the Admissions Register**

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the pupil will attend.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, applies.

It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date. Therefore, we encourage parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

### **Contents of Attendance Register**

The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion the school must record whether each pupil is:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Attending an approved educational activity; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance and is supported by the use of our Management Information System to record attendance information.

### **Present at School (and Lateness)**

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration, they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.



It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

The Attendance Manager will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

Our pupils must arrive by 8.50am on each school day.

Our morning register is taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.15am

Afternoon register is taken at 12.50pm for years R, 1 2 and 3. 1.50pm for years 4, 5 and 6

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (L) – which counts as present.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code “Late after registers close” (U) which is an unauthorised absence mark. However, if the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly. See DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#).

### Effects of Late Arrival at School

When a child arrives late to school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons

### Authorised Absence

‘Authorised absence’ means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

**The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:**



## Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows Department for Education guidance '[Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)' 2022<sup>1</sup> which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

Parents must ring school on the absence line 0117 903 0075 before 8.30am (press option 1 to leave a message and report the reason for their child's absence) If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

## Mental Health and Wellbeing

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Senior Mental Health Lead or Designated Safeguarding Lead for further information on the support available.

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

## Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out on Bromcom. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.





## Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out on Bromcom. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it's an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

## Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

## Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

## Suspensions (aka Exclusions)

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an Exclusion. The school will follow the current [DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions](#).

Any exclusion **must** be agreed by the headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the HOPE Virtual School. In other instances, where a



pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out on Bromcom. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

### **First Day of Absence Response**

The attendance manager considers all absent children on a case-by-case basis. Parents of children not considered vulnerable will be sent a text to prompt them to call school and inform of the reason why their child is absent.

The attendance manager considers any vulnerable children\* absent from school and will alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead and assistant Vice Principal risk assess priorities for phone calls and home visits.

The attendance manager will make phone calls in order of registered priority for the child plus any other emergency contacts if there is no answer.

The attendance manager will, with another member of the pastoral team, make home visits as early in the day as possible.

Phone calls and home visits are recorded on CPOMs and in comment box on Bromcom.

Parents must ensure that school are given **at least three** emergency contact numbers and that these numbers are updated as necessary. School will remind parents in newsletters and at parents' evenings.

**If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided or get any response to a home visit and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, we may request a Welfare Check from the police.**

*\* Children in Care; children subject to Child Protection Plans; children open to Social Care as a Child in Need; children who have previously been reported missing; pupils who make their own way to school; those with recent safeguarding concerns raised in school.*

### **Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance**

Whole school, year group and class attendance is shared weekly within the school achievement assembly. Each week class teachers share and discuss the class, year and whole school attendance. This is displayed in the classrooms. The class with the weeks highest attendance receives the attendance cup for the week. Each term the year group with the highest attendance receives a half hour time in the woods with pastoral staff.

The Attendance Manager and Assistant Vice Principal monitor attendance of all pupils and parents of those that show improvement receive texts and/or letters to recognise this.



## Leave of Absence Requests – ‘Exceptional Circumstances’

**The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.**

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school’s discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our school’s Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child’s Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting in advance where possible and agreed with the Social Care and The HOPE Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact the HOPE Virtual School in relation to any requests for term time absence for a child in care.

### Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school’s decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Day trips



- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions.

### **Approved Educational Activity (AEA)**

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case. (See DfE 2020 School Attendance guidance.)

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our school will make arrangements for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (off-site educational activity). The school expects the alternative provider (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual pupils, to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a daily basis, or more frequently if agreed with the alternative setting.

Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the AP.

### **Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in the law and DfE guidance)**

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- Our school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- The transport provided by our school or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's ['Home to school travel and transport'](#) guidance document, or ask the school for a printed copy.)
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- The pupil is in custody, but still on the school roll. (If the school has evidence that the pupil is attending educational activities, we can record those sessions as 'present at approved educational activity'.)



## **Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)**

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the Attendance Manager and/or Assistant Vice Principal to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of an Attendance Contract.

If our school refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will at least be evidenced via the sending of a warning letter.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

## **Pupils on Reduced (Part-time) Timetables**

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

## **Penalty Notices and Prosecutions**

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.



Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a Penalty Notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

Penalty Notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

A pupil's unauthorised absence from school could result in one of the following:

1. A Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 payable within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay will result in prosecution.)
2. Prosecution.

Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or 3 months imprisonment. (See DfE's statutory guidance on [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#) for more information and Bristol City Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, available here: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/education-welfare> or ask the school for printed copies.)

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents with responsibility for the children, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

In addition to Penalty Notices, there is a range of other legal interventions open to schools

Schools, trusts and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are: • Parenting contracts • Education supervision orders • Attendance prosecution • Parenting orders • Fixed penalty notices

### **Children Missing Education (CME)**

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. The school will follow [Bristol City Council's Children Missing Education guidance](#), and make CME and Pupil Tracking referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the Children Missing Education Officer if unsure about any individual cases: [childrenmissingeducation@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:childrenmissingeducation@bristol.gov.uk)



## Following up Unexplained Absences

Explain how you will follow up on any unexplained absences. You may also wish to make it clear when an unexplained absence becomes unauthorised. For example:

Where no contact has been made with the school the school will contact parents by text, email, telephone or home visit to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 1 school day, we will make the absence as unauthorised, using the **O** code. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts.

## Reporting to Parents

School will share termly attendance data with parent/carers via text/email or letter. Attendance certificates will also be shared with parent/carers at parent evenings and with school reports.

Where a child's attendance drops below 90%, for whatever reason, our school contact parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.

## Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

Reasons for absence are recorded on our management information system, Bromcom. Notes include the reason for absence, how the information was received and by who, including home visits. Texts sent by school are recorded as are phone calls with no response.

## Roles and Responsibilities

**Please ensure you outline how you monitor the attendance of vulnerable groups. How are they identified and what course of action is likely to be taken?**

Please detail whose role it is to monitor trends and patterns of absence so appropriate actions can be taken e.g.

- Follow-up action-plans for pupils with low attendance
- Timely liaison with home
- Referral to outside agencies

## The Governing Board



The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis (6 times a year). It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **The Headteacher/Principal**

- The headteacher/principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- The headteacher/principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and requests fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **Strategic Lead for Attendance (Assistant Vice Principal)**

- The Assistant Vice Principal is the strategic lead for attendance this includes interrogating attendance by group, such as pupils entitled to Free School Meals, Pupil Premium pupils, pupils with SEND, Children in Care, attendance by Ethnicity and Language (English/EAL).
- Reports attendance termly to the Headteacher.
- Monitors Persistent absentees and liaises with Attendance Manager to send texts, write letters and invite parent/carers to attendance action plan meetings and reviews.
- Oversees and signs the compilation of Penalty Notice paperwork.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead monitors the attendance of the safeguarding vulnerable pupils alongside the Attendance Manager and Assistant Vice Principal. The DSL

### **Operational Lead for Attendance (Attendance Manager)**

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level on daily, termly and yearly basis.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher and Assistant Vice Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Supports the Assistant Vice Principal in creating attendance action plans with parents and compiling penalty notice requests.
- Co-ordinates requests for Term-time Leave of Absence (this includes liaison with the DSL and Safeguarding Team) and advises the headteacher as requested.
- Refers individual cases to the Education Welfare Service as decided by the Assistant Vice \_principal and Attendance Manager.





- Positively promotes attendance across the school including on Class Dojo, displays, certificates and reward sessions.

### **Pastoral Team**

- Support the Attendance Manager/Assistant Vice Principal with home visits as required.
- Support individual pupils with attendance as appropriate e.g. pupil is already on their caseload.
- Support the termly attendance rewards.

### **Class Teachers**

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on time.
- Class teachers informally monitor attendance of pupils and share any concerns or patterns of absence noticed with the Attendance Manager and Assistant Vice Principal.
- Class teachers have initial informal conversations with parent/carers about their pupil's attendance.
- Class teachers support the positive promotion of attendance with their class.

### **Attendance/Admissions Administration Assistant**

- Undertakes Attendance Managers daily duties in their absence.
- Supports Assistant Vice Principal with attendance reporting utilising Bromcom.

### **Office Staff**

- School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system, Bromcom.

### **Policy Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Vice Principal, or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

### **Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, Inclusion Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Social Emotional and Mental Health Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy



### **Guidance Documents:**

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE May 2022)

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities (DfE Updated August 2022)

[Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-school-attendance-support-for-schools-and-local-authorities)

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions>

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DfE January 2013)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

Keeping children safe in education (DfE September 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education>

School attendance parental responsibility measures (DfE January 2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

School census guidance and regulation

<https://www.gov.uk/education/school-censuses-and-slasc>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE July 2014)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>

Children Missing Education Guidance (Bristol City Council January 2018)

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/children-missing-education-cme>

Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (Bristol City Council September 2018)

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/education-welfare>



**Appendix I – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance Codes**

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. present at another school or PRU)	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence



<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Where the school site, or part of it, is closed due to unavoidable cause; or the transport provided by the school or local authority for pupils (who do not live with walking distance) is not available; or where a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school; or a pupil is detained in custody for less than four months.	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances



## Appendix 2 Leave of absence requests

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS – KEY GUIDE FOR PARENTS

We take attendance very seriously at May Park Primary School as there is very clear evidence that taking your child out of school during term time can and does have an impact on your child's academic progress. Here at May Park we will consider every application individually; but please note that our policy is **NOT** to grant any leave of absence other than in the most exceptional circumstances as judged by the Principal.

#### 1. Applications

An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, in advance of any intended absence by the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides. If you are the child's parent but you do not normally live with the child, you must seek the consent of the parent/carer with whom the child lives and that person should make the request.

May Park Primary School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing either by email or letter. Requests for absence for the following reasons may not be authorised if requested for the following reasons:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods;
- overlap with beginning or end of term;
- and during periods of national tests i.e.: SATS, Phonics Checks

#### 2. Penalty Notices and Prosecution

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child(ren) attend school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (amended regulations 2013) to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the academy. **A Penalty Notice may be requested if a pupil has a high number of unauthorised absences within an academic year.** In cases where a penalty notice has been issued previously and/or there is a persistent failure to secure good attendance, we may request that the Local Authority supports us in a criminal prosecution of the parents.

#### 3. Academic Study

Whether the extended leave of absence is granted or not there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period. It is the Parent/Carer's responsibility to collect appropriate work to complete.

#### 4. Safeguarding and Extended Leave

For any request for extended absence parents/carers will be invited to a pre-absence meeting to discuss our duty to safeguard pupils who are leaving the country or city for extended periods of time.

#### 5. Evidence Supporting Absence

The evidence you will need to provide depends entirely on what type of leave from school you are applying for. For example, for time off to attend a funeral you may be required to provide a death certificate. We will ask for specific evidence for any absence request. If you are unable to provide evidence, then your request may be refused and the absence unauthorised.

**If you require any support in understanding the information above, please contact our attendance officer Ms Polly Stokes before applying for a leave of absence.**



**MAY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL - Leave of Absence Request**

This application must come from the parent with whom the child(ren) normally reside:  
(For a Child in Care this must come from the child’s Social Worker)

Date of Absence			
First Day of Absence		Last Day of Absence	
Total number of days Missed		Are you going abroad?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YES</li> <li>• NO</li> </ul>
Destination (if Applicable):			

CHILD/CHILDREN’S NAMES				
	First Name(s):	Surname/Family Name (as on birth certificate):	Year Group	Class
1				
2				
3				

Reasons for absence from school (attach a letter if necessary):

.....

.....

**Declaration**

*“I have read and understood the information in the “Key Guide for Parents” and I wish to make application for my child named above to have an authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that.....”*

- A penalty notice may be issued if the leave is not agreed, the child does not return on the agreed date.
- A Penalty Notice may result in a fine. In the case of a non-payment, the case may be referred to Court which could result in a criminal record and fines up to £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment. In exceptional circumstances, penalty notices may not be issued, and cases may be taken straight to Court.
- If travelling abroad, a copy of the return travel documentation, the name & phone number/email of a contact person whilst abroad is required.
- Children Missing Education enquiries may be made regarding the child’s whereabouts if they do not return on the agreed date. This may result in the child being deleted from roll.
- When signing you confirm that you are not removing the child for a reason that may cause harm. This includes but is not limited to FGM, Forced Marriage, CSE and CCE.

Name of Parent/Carer making application .....

Signed .....

Date .....

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO THE OFFICE**



**OFFICE USE ONLY**

<b>Date application received:</b>	
-----------------------------------	--

	<b>Current year:</b>		<b>Last year:</b>
<b>% Attendance</b>		<b>% Attendance</b>	
<b>% Authorised Absence</b>		<b>% Authorised Absence</b>	
<b>% Unauthorised Absence</b>		<b>% Unauthorised Absence</b>	
<b>Days Absent (Sept to Date)</b>		<b>Total days absent</b>	

<b>Date of meeting with parent(s): (If applicable)</b>		<b>Meeting held with: (Name and role)</b>	
<b>Record of information discussed at the meeting:</b>			



### ADDITIONAL FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

Pupils attend school for a maximum of 190 days each academic year. Regular attendance is vital for your child’s educational progress. The Local Authority expects that all parents/carers ensure their children attend school whenever possible. Absence during school time is largely prohibited by regulation and hinders academic progress. Even in exceptional circumstances, the following factors may be taken into account when considering an application for leave:

- Will leave at this point in time be detrimental to the pupil's education?
- Will s/he miss any national testes or examinations?
- Is his/her attendance a cause for concern?
- Has his/her attendance been a cause for concern in previous years?
- Is the proposed absence during the month of September or any other transition period?
- Has s/he already had leave during term time this academic year?
- Did s/he have leave of absence during term time in previous school year(s)?
- Does s/he have any absences which have been recorded as unauthorised this year?
- Safeguarding concern associated with extended absence e.g. FGM, Forced Marriage, CSE and CCE.

Leave request approved?	YES	NO
Parent/Carer(s) informed of potential consequences of taking unauthorised leave?		
Parent/Carer(s) informed of potential consequences of failure to return on the due date?		
Parent/Carer(s) informed of potential consequences of failure to comply with UK law regarding safeguarding children with specific reference to FGM, Forced Marriage, CSE and CCE		
<b>Reason for decision:</b>		

<b>Principal’s signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	