



Maple Grove Primary Attendance Policy

INTRODUCTION

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Maple Grove Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are both in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at Maple Grove Primary School and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head of School and Parent Advisory Body at Maple Grove Primary School work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

1.1 We expect all children who are on roll at Maple Grove Primary School to attend school every day, as long as they are fit and healthy to do so. We believe the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children where they can achieve their full potential academically, socially and emotionally.

1.2 All parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives an education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and any special needs. Most parents fulfil their legal obligation by registering their child in a school. Children must legally be in education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16.

1.3 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (amended 2006) the school's governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present and punctual at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. The register will also show whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

1.4 At the beginning of each academic year, the school will circulate to all governors, staff, parents/ carers and pupils a clear written statement of the basic elements of the schools attendance policy. Copies will also be given to pupils who join in the course of the year.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the school's electronic register. Authorised Absence is when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the reason has been passed on to the school by a parent or legal guardian. For medical reasons, a medical certificate, doctor's letter, prescription copy or similar proof will need to be provided before the child's absence will be authorised. Only the school can make the absence authorised. Parents do not have authority to authorise their child's absence.

2. It is accepted that from time to time children do become unwell. However, a child's attendance is expected to be at least 95%, even taking into account occasional ill health. If a child is vomiting, has diarrhoea or a high temperature they should not attend school and Parents/Carers are expected to contact the school on their child's 1st day of absence. If a child were to become unfit for school, whilst in attendance then school staff will contact Parents/Carers accordingly asking them to collect their child. This absence will be marked as an authorised illness ('I').

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

3. Unauthorised Absence is when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Parents/Carers can be fined or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised absence. Examples of unauthorised absence include taking holidays during term time, visiting relatives, time off for family celebrations and arriving after the register has closed i.e. after 9.30am. Unauthorised absences will also be recorded for any children where the school has not received sufficient information or reasons around a child's absence. ('O' code). Coughs, colds, sore throats and other minor ailments will not be authorised by the school, and will be classed as unauthorised.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE

4. Persistent Absence (PA) is the official term used when a child has an attendance of 90% or less. The school will keep a record of all PA children. All children on this list will be monitored at least fortnightly throughout the academic year and will be required to provide substantive evidence to authorise further absences, even when & if their attendance increases above 90%.

4.1 Where there are additional concerns affecting a child's attendance, an Early Help Assessment will be considered as well as further family support and/or intervention from other outside agencies.

REPORTING ABSENCE

5.1 Parents/Carers of absent children are expected to telephone the school before 9.00am on the 1st day of absence. The school office is staffed from 8:00am to accept parent calls. Information about the child's absence is then recorded, including the reason which will be recorded on the school's information management system. If the absence is known about in advance, such as a hospital appointment, a copy of the appointment letter should be given to the school office.

5.2 Wherever practicably possible, medical appointments should be made outside of school hours or in the holiday periods.

5.3 Time out of school to attend appointments should be kept to a minimum and Parents/Carers will be expected to bring their child to school both before and after the appointment time, not withdrawing them for the entire school day. Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 8:55am will have their absence recorded as a medical absence ('M' code). Evidence of these appointments will be requested by the school.

5.4 When a child is absent unexpectedly and without an explanation, the class teacher will record the absence in the class register. A report will be run each morning which identifies any child who is absent without the reason being known (identified as 'N' code). Parents/carers of children with an 'N' code will receive contact from the school in the form of a telephone call and/or a text message. Once the reason for a child's absence is known the registers will be updated accordingly. If we do not receive information about a child whereabouts by 9:30am we will conduct home visits to ensure that the child is safe.

5.5 At the end of each week, any child who still has an 'N' code will receive a school letter seeking information about the reasons for the absence/s. At this point the child's attendance code will be changed to an unauthorised ('O'). This absence will remain unauthorised until an adequate reason is provided by a Parent/Carer or until medical evidence has been received by the school.

ABSENCE REQUESTS

6.1 At Maple Grove Primary School, we believe that children should be in school every day so that they can make as much progress as possible. Requests for absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances which are due to extenuating or compassionate reasons.

6.2 Parents/Carers must apply for a child's term time absence in advance. Permission will not be granted once the absence has been taken. All requests must be made using the designated form and the decision will be recorded. This form is known as 'Request for Leave during Term Time.' All leave requests received will initially be assessed by the Head Teacher who will record a decision on the form. The school will send this form back to the Parent/Carer informing them as to the number of days leave that have been granted, as well as the possibility of incurring a 'Fixed Penalty Notice.' Parents can if they wish ask for their request to be considered by those that are responsible for governance and have delegated authority by the Lion Academy Trust Board.

6.3 ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR HOLIDAYS OR TO VISIT RELATIVES DURING TERM TIME WILL NOT BE APPROVED.

MEDICAL ABSENCES

7. Medical Absences will be recorded and monitored as 'M' on a child's registration record. The duration of absences granted due to health conditions will follow Government health guidelines unless stipulated otherwise through health professional guidance such as a Doctor/GP etc. Where a child's health condition is deemed to be affecting their school

attendance without medical verification, the child and his/her parent/s will be encouraged to meet with the School Nurse.

LONG TERM ABSENCE

8.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over 10 days, the school will do all it can to send material home, to enable the child to keep up with their school work and reduce the impact on the child's education. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside of school.

8.2 A support plan will be put in place for children with chronic illness.

8.3 For children whose long-term absence is unauthorised, Parent/Carers will be referred to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service and they are likely to receive a Fixed Penalty Fine. Where unauthorised absences exceed 4 weeks parents will be notified that their child's name will be taken off roll.

REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

9.1 The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem with the Head Teacher. If the situation does not improve, the school will then make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer and/or other external agencies, who will visit the home and seek to ensure the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

9.2 After a 2-week monitoring period where there has been no or insufficient improvement, a 'Parental notification' letter will be sent home. Where there is still no significant improvement a School Attendance Panel (SAP) meeting will be held in school, inviting the Parents/Carers, and chaired by a senior court officer. A further 2 week monitoring period will be granted. Where no improvement has been made by this stage, the case will be referred to the local magistrate's court.

9.3 Legal action may be taken against any parents or guardians who fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

10.1 Under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Local Authorities are required to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to the Parent/Carer of a child who has irregular school attendance, where the absence is unauthorised by the school. Fixed Penalty Notices are an alternative to prosecution. They do not require the Parent/Carer to appear in court and no criminal record is incurred.

10.2 An assessment of the circumstances will take place before a Fixed Penalty Notice is served. Parents will receive a warning letter that if any unauthorised absence occurs they would receive a Fixed Penalty notice. However, the authorising officer (Educational Welfare

Courts Officer or the Head of Services) has the discretion to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for a first offence in exceptional circumstances.

10.3 A Fixed Penalty Notice imposes a fine of between £100-£120, per child to each Parent/Carer reduced to £60 if paid within 28 days. If the fine is paid after 28 days but within 42 days of being issued, the fine is £120. If the fine is not paid within 42 days, the Parent/Carer will be prosecuted in a Magistrates court for the offence under S.444 of the Education Act 1996.

PUNCTUALITY

11.1 Frequent lateness can often precede poor attendance and also present difficulties for the pupil in achieving fully at school. Persistent lateness does not constitute as full school attendance (section 444 of the Education Act, 1996).

11.2 In KS1 and KS2, the school gates open at 8:30am until 8:50am where a whistle is blown to indicate the start of the school day. Gates are then closed at

8:55am which is sufficient time for all pupils to come into their classroom. Once the school gates have been closed at 8:55am, the only way to get into school is via the main school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 8:55am will be marked as late in the attendance record ('L' code).

In the Early Years Foundation Stage the school gates open at 8:45am until 9:00am. Gates are then closed at 9:05am which is sufficient time for all pupils to come into their classroom. Once the school gates have been closed at 9:10am, the only way to get into school is via pedestrian gate. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 9:10 am will be marked as late in the attendance record ('L' code).

Records are kept of those pupils who are late and is documented on the electronic register for each pupil. Any child who arrives for school later than 9:30am once registration has closed will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning ('U' code).

11.3 Persistent lateness will lead to formal procedures (letters and meetings) from the school and, if the situation does not improve, Parents/Carers will be referred to the Education Welfare service and/or other external agencies.

11.4 Pupils will be monitored regularly for lateness. Parents will be notified and letters sent home to inform them and/or invite them to a meeting with the Head of School to discuss the adverse effects punctuality has on their child's learning as well as its social & emotional impact.

11.5 Pupils who have 12 'U' codes in any one term period without substantive reason will be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) and Parents/carers may incur a fine.

ATTENDANCE TARGETS

The school sets attendance targets each year which are agreed by senior staff and governors. These targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in the previous year.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

13.1 It is the responsibility of the Parent Advisory Body to monitor overall attendance, and the implementation of this policy, and they will request an annual report from the Head Teacher.

13.2 All absences and lateness will be monitored for individual pupils so that appropriate action can be taken. Absences will also be monitored for trends in relation to gender, ethnicity, year groups, classes, seasonal patterns, and absences on certain days of the week, the nature of authorised and unauthorised absences and individual pupil absence rates.

13.3 Half – termly attendance data will be given to the Head Teacher and Education Welfare Officer to help inform targets and action plans.

13.4 The school will notify the local authority of pupils whose attendance is irregular or who are continuously absent without authorisation for ten or more school days.

13.5 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of 3 years.

13.6 The rates of attendance will be reported in school newsletters, on the school website and in the 'Information for Parents' booklet.

13.7 Attendance will be discussed with parents at termly Parents' evenings should this be a cause for concern.

13.8 The governing body will review this policy every 3 years, or earlier if considered necessary.