



Manor Field
PRIMARY SCHOOL
Respect Believe Achieve

Attendance Policy	
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Manor Field Primary School Attendance Policy

The Government says:

- **There is a legal responsibility for you to send your child to school every day and to be punctual.**
- **School is in session for 190 days a year leaving parents a further 175 days a year in which to have days out together and take a holiday.**
- **Absence is classed as authorised (where the school approves the pupil's absence) or unauthorised (where the school does not approve the absence).**

Rationale

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.

At Manor Field Primary School, we recognise the importance of regular school attendance as a key factor in promoting the welfare, social inclusion and achievement of pupils. The school year consists of 190 academic days. The Staff and Governors have planned the whole curriculum over those 190 days, with our goal of raising children's achievement and levels of attainment. In addition to the National Curriculum programmes of study, we also highly value the personal, social, moral and spiritual development of every child and have planned programmes for those aspects throughout school. Children are therefore expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence.

A high priority is given to ensuring that parents and pupils are supported to achieve regular attendance of pupils registered in our school.

Purposes

- To support the school vision, mission and aims.
- To ensure all pupils achieve their full potential.
- To support all pupils to achieve their maximum possible attendance.
- To ensure the safety of all pupils by recording attendance and lateness.

Our Shared Responsibilities

- Each child's full attendance is our collective responsibility. Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn
- Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child's attendance and punctuality.
- The LA provides the support of the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation Team to ensure children attend school and to support any difficulties which may cause repeated absence.

The Department for Education and Employment has issued guidelines on School attendance:

- Children should attend school every day and punctually.
- Absence is classed as Authorised and Unauthorised.
- Parents/carers will be given an annual total of their child's attendance, absence and punctuality in her/his Annual Report.
- The Governing Body will give an overall school attendance/absence rate in its Annual Report to Parents (usually each July).
- "Performance Tables" of school/LEA attendance figures are now published annually and nationally.

Punctuality

Pupils who are late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. At Manor Field, we open our doors 15 minutes before the school day starts in order to make the most of our "contact time" with children. Pupils are late if they arrive after 9.00 am when the register is taken. Pupils arriving after 9.30 a.m. will be recorded as absent for the morning session.

If a pupil is late, or leaving school early, she/he must come to the office and be signed in/out of the 'Student Registration Folder' by a member of the office staff. It may be that the personal circumstances of parent/carers add to persistent lateness and the school will work with families to try to find a suitable solution to ensure children arrive on time.

In the case of persistent absence as a school we would take the following action:

Step 1	Parents/carers will be contacted by letter to note the school's concern and the need for improvement.
Step 2	If improvement has not been achieved after 2 weeks, a request will be made for parent/carers to attend a meeting with the Attendance Officer/member of staff in charge of attendance to discuss strategies for improvement, during which the causes for poor punctuality will be discussed. An action plan for improvement will be co-produced during this meeting.
Step 3	This will be continually monitored and if improvement is not achieved Parents/Carers will be invited in for a follow up meeting to discuss further options

Absence

There are two types of absence:

- **Authorised** - where the school approves the pupil's absence
- **Unauthorised** - where the school did not approve the absence

Parents may not authorise absence – only the **Head Teacher** can do this.

Illness

If a child is absent due to illness, parents/carers should report the absence on **PS Connect** (which is an app that can be downloaded onto a computer, tablet or mobile phone). If parents are unable to access the app then they should call or e-mail the school on each day of the absence (unless the school has been informed of a long-term absence). The school can be contacted on either 01444 233368 or by emailing office@manorfield.w-sussex.sch.uk

This should happen as early as possible on the morning of the first day of a child's absence and then on each morning for the duration of the absence. If the school has not received notification on the first day of absence a text will be sent to the family to seek an explanation for the absence. **If there is no reason provided by parent/carer for the absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised.**

Medical and Dental appointments

If at all possible, these should be made out of school hours or during school holidays. However, there are occasions when parents/carers have no other alternative. Children should come to school before and after an appointment (dependent on the time and location of the appointment) wherever possible. The appointment letter should **be sent via PS Connect** or taken to the school office for a copy to be taken **BEFORE** the appointment. The child should be signed 'OUT' and 'RETURNED' in the "Student registration Folder" in the office. This is for Security and Fire and Safety reasons.

If a parent/carer knows of a forthcoming absence they should make a request using the 'Request for Authorisation of Absence' form which should be submitted at least two weeks in advance. The school will then decide whether the absence will be authorised. If an absence is due to a medical appointment the school will accept a photocopy of the appointment letter instead of a 'Request for Authorisation of Absence' form.

Authorised absence

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'. DfeE /NAHT guidance.

Illness, medical appointments which cannot be arranged outside the school day will be authorised upon receipt of an appointment letter.

Unauthorised absence

Examples of unauthorised absence include: keeping a child off school because it is their birthday, shopping for clothes, taking them to visit relatives.

Holidays during Term Time

Holidays in term time are not an entitlement and are strongly discouraged by the Government, Local Education Authority and the School.

Parents should be aware that term time holidays are not an automatic right. Only the Headteacher can authorise absences under exceptional circumstances, which are defined as **'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'. DfeE /NAHT guidance.**

Parents who decide to take a holiday without the Headteacher's permission will incur unauthorised absences for their child and the absence may be referred to the Pupil Entitlement Team for their consideration as to whether a Fixed Penalty Notice should be issued.

Use of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

FPN - they are generally issued where there have been at least 10 sessions (there are 2 sessions per day) of unauthorised absence from school within a recorded 10 school week period. However, there are some occasions where they are issued outside of these criteria. Should the period of absence for a holiday in term time be 15 school days or more, an FPN may not be deemed suitable. Instead the matter may be brought directly before the court.

This may be for a holiday that was requested and unauthorised by the Headteacher, withdrawal of children from school during term time that was not requested in advance, frequent late arrival at school, and frequent or lengthy absence due to illness without any supporting medical documentation.

Strategies for Improving Attendance

Strategies for improving attendance will be reviewed regularly by the Attendance Officer and school staff throughout the year.

Whole school and individual class attendance are reported in the monthly newsletter.

Monitoring Attendance and Tackling Poor Attendance

A register of attendance will be taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session using online registration through Bromcom. In the event that the school management system is not in operation the class teacher should complete a class list which will be kept adjacent to the class PC clearly labelled. Once complete the paper register should be taken to the front office. One of the school administrative team will ensure that updated lists are provided on each occasion that a new pupil is enrolled within a class.

Each week the School Administrator will review the previous week's attendance throughout the whole school. Any unexplained absences will be followed up with a letter to parents and late arrivals will be monitored and letters sent to parents once a child reaches 3 late marks.

Attendance and punctuality levels will be monitored rigorously through a half-termly meeting between the Attendance Officer and the member of staff in charge of attendance. Analysis of all pupils will be made with regard to punctuality, percentage level of attendance, number of broken weeks and pattern of absence.

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year) as a school this would become a cause for concern.

Individual pupils identified as a cause for concern within any of the above categories will be discussed, with the reasons for their absences explored. It may be that there are genuine reasons for pupil absence e.g. a child who suffers from specific medical conditions or a child who has suffered a single bout of severe illness. In these cases, no action will be taken. If there appears no reasonable explanation for poor levels of attendance or punctuality, in order that concerns can be addressed and resolved promptly, the following steps are carried out:

Step 1	Parents/carers will be contacted by letter to note the school's concern and the need for improvement.
Step 2	If improvement has not been achieved after 2 weeks, a request will be made for parent/carers to attend a meeting with the Attendance Officer/member of staff in charge of attendance to discuss strategies for improvement, during which the causes for poor attendance/punctuality will be discussed. An action plan for improvement will be co- produced during this meeting.
Step 3	If this action does not prove successful, or parents/carers have not responded to the initial letter and attendance has not improved, a second letter will be sent, advising the family that the child's attendance is being monitored closely and if an improvement is not seen, a referral may be made to the Pupil Entitlement; Investigation Team.
Step 4	If an improvement has not been noted, and a referral has been made to the Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team, parents will be informed via a letter.

Persistent or regular poor attendance may result in court action against the parent/carer. Extended absence of more than 4 weeks may result in the removal of your child's name from our School Roll, and on return, you may need to re-apply for admission.

Evaluating Attendance and Punctuality Levels

The school is committed to achieving excellent attendance levels for all pupils within our school. In order to achieve this, evaluation of attendance levels will be carried out on a termly basis to identify any necessary action required for specific groups within the school:

Data will be collected regarding the attendance of particular groups i.e.

Pupils on the CP register

Looked After Pupils

Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs

Groups by ethnicity

Data regarding attendance will be regularly reported to governors.

Appendix 1:

Request for Authorisation of Absence During Term Time - available on the school website under 'Useful Forms'