



Moordown St. John's
Church of England Primary School

Policy for Pupil Attendance 2018/2019

**"A Christian community where commitment
to educational excellence changes lives"**

UNCRC Article 28: Every child has the right to an education

Date Ratified: 16 November 2018

Review Date: September 2019

**A copy of this policy in alternative formats, eg large print,
is available on request from the school office.**

Attendance Policy 2018/2019

Rationale

As a Church of England Primary School, we seek to further the work of Christ by expecting, nurturing and demonstrating the Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5) in our day to day lives.

The Fruits of the Spirit include Love, Joy, Peace, Goodness, Kindness, Patience, Gentleness, Faithfulness and Self-control.

At Moordown St. John's we also aim to honour and fulfil the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

'Rights' are things every child should have or be able to do. All children have the same rights. These rights are listed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Almost every country has agreed to these rights. All the rights are connected to each other, and all are equally important. Sometimes, we have to think about rights in terms of what is best for children in a situation, and what is critical to life and protection from harm. As children grow, they have more responsibility to make choices and exercise their rights.

This policy refers directly to the following article:

Article 28: Every child has the right to an education

SUCCESS (Skills, Understanding, Creativity, Curiosity, Enjoyment, Spirituality, Security) is at the centre of our school's ethos and identity.

S – **Skills** that embed knowledge for a life full of learning and healthy relationships

U – **Understanding** how knowledge and concepts can be applied and built upon to achieve deep learning

C – **Creativity** to use skills and knowledge imaginatively to express oneself and solve problems

C – **Curiosity** to explore, investigate and understand the world

E – **Enjoyment** of life and of learning

S – **Spirituality** where faith is nourished, respected, challenged and lived

S – **Security** in themselves and who they are to reach their full potential

In order to achieve SUCCESS pupils need to attend school regularly and punctually.

Our Attendance Mission Statement

Moordown St. John's Church of England Primary School seeks to work with parents/carers to ensure that all children receive an education which maximises opportunities for them to realise their true potential.

The school aims to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

We are proud of our attendance record, which is generally very good, and are grateful to our supportive parents and carers who work with us to promote and encourage good attendance by their children. School staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

Addressing the issues behind non-attendance and persistent absenteeism is a priority for the school.

The Government expectation is that all pupils will attain at least 96% attendance.

It is very important therefore that parents/carers make sure their children attend regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and attendance below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school and higher education, employment or training

The School Attendance Lead is Nicky Armstrong.

The Director with responsibility for attendance is Zeena Bonds

Operating the policy

Our Aim: To consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children

To achieve this we will:

1. Promote effective partnerships with parents/carers and provide support, advice and guidance on the importance of regular and punctual attendance of their children.
2. Communicate roles and responsibilities of parents/carers and school staff and promote consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
3. Apply the Attendance Policy and record/analyse pupil attendance data in a consistent and fair manner.
4. Promote effective partnerships with the Education Social Work Service and/or other services and agencies as required.
5. Recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

1 Promote effective partnerships with parents/carers and to provide support, advice and guidance on the importance of regular and punctual attendance of their children.

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the child. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Seek to foster and develop positive partnerships with parents/carers; encourage/invite parents/carers in to school to discuss individual attendance concerns; signpost parents/carers to our Parent Support Worker, School Nurse or other professional/agency for support and guidance.
- Set whole school targets in relation to attendance and persistent absence. The whole school attendance target for 2018/2019 is 96.5% with less than 15 individual pupils being classified as Persistent Absentees at the end of the academic year.
- Expect that all pupils will achieve an attendance level of at least 96%.
- Highlight the importance of good attendance and progress towards attendance targets in our newsletters, class, assemblies, consultation evenings, workshops and in the prospectus. Attendance issues may also be discussed in Inclusion meetings, pupil target setting meetings and/or in relevant staff meetings.
- Report to parents on how their child is performing in school, what their attendance level is and how this relates to their attainments.

2 Communicate roles and responsibilities of staff and parents/carers and promote consistency in carrying out designated tasks.

Roles and responsibilities of parents/carers

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility under the 1996 Education Act. Permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Support the school in aiming for their child to achieve 100% attendance each year.
The expected level of pupil attendance is at least 96%.
- Ensure that their children arrive in school on time.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone/text as soon as possible on the first day of absence. **A child who is absent without a reason being provide is considered a safeguarding matter.**

PLEASE NOTE *If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers after 3 days of absence, the school will make all reasonable efforts to establish the whereabouts of your child, including making enquiries to known friends and the wider family. School staff may also visit the family home. It may be necessary to start 'Child Missing in Education' procedures as set down by the Local Authority.*

We have a legal duty to report to the Local Authority any pupil who is absent without explanation for 10 consecutive days. *The Local Authority will commence 'Child Missing in Education' procedures which include visiting your child's home and alerting other key services to locate the child. Please help us to help you and your child by ensuring we always have up-to-date contact details for you.*

- Send in a letter confirming the reason for the absence upon their child's return to school.

- Speak to the class teacher if they are concerned about their child's attendance or their child appears to be reluctant to come to school.
- Discuss with the class teacher any planned absences well in advance.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance *See Appendix 1*
- Provide supporting evidence/documentation, if requested, to verify pupil absence.
- Work with the school, Education Social Work Service and/or other professional/agency, to resolve any concerns regarding their child's attendance.
- Ensure the school is kept up-to-date with any changes to their contact information.
- Collect their child promptly at the end of the school day.
- Complete a 'Leavers Form' (available from the School Office) prior to their child leaving the school (other than when transferring to the secondary school). This should detail the child's proposed leaving date, the name and contact details of the proposed new school and the family's new address and telephone number (if relevant). *If pupils leave and we do not have this information, the child is considered to be 'missing'. Investigations will be carried out to locate the child, which includes liaising with the Education Social Work Service, the Police and other agencies.* Please note: when a child moves overseas the school is required to make a referral to the Education Social Work Service before we are able to remove your child from our roll. This is standard practice ~ the Education Social Work Service will make contact with you to verify your move.

Roles and responsibilities of school staff

School staff will:

- Ensure all students are accurately registered. We maintain unambiguous procedures for statutory registration. Registers close 10 minutes after the start of registration ie at 9.10am and 1.25pm.
- Endeavour to work with and support families whenever possible; investigate any underlying reasons for pupil absence; provide support and guidance to families where pupils may be reluctant to come to school.
- Liaise with the Attendance Lead on matters of attendance and punctuality, communicating any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Discuss with parent/carers the need and reasons for frequent or continuous absence (except where a child is clearly unwell) and encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. Discuss attendance at pupil/parent/teacher meetings and how this relates to pupil attainment.
- Discuss individual and whole school attendance in Inclusion meetings, pupil target setting meetings and/or in relevant staff meetings.

Roles and Responsibilities of the School's Attendance Lead

The School's Attendance Lead will:

- Oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school.
- Ensure that attendance is recorded accurately.

- Contact parents/carers of children who are regularly late in arriving at school to ascertain the reasons for lateness and to offer support in improving pupil punctuality.
- Contact parents/carers on the first day of absence if the reason for non-attendance has not been provided. If contact has not been established with any of the named parents/ carers/emergency contacts after 3 days of absence, contact will be made with known friends and/or the wider family. School staff may also visit the family home. Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to the Education Social Work Service as a 'Child Missing Education'.
- Meet half-termly with the Inclusion Leader and the named Director for Attendance to review and analyse individual pupil and whole school attendance, including progress towards targets.
- Write to parents/carers of pupils who are persistently late in arriving for school.
- Write to parents/carers of pupils where attendance has fallen to an unacceptable level to see if there are any underlying reasons for the absences and/or if there is any support we can offer eg the opportunity to discuss the issue with a member of the school staff and/or school nurse.
- At the end of each half-term, identify pupils whose attendance is 90% or less; these pupils are considered by the Government to be 'Persistent Absentees'. Contact parents/carers to make them aware and to ask them to ensure their child's attendance improves.
- Refer to Education Social Work Service pupils whose attendance continues to cause concern.
- Report on attendance to the Curriculum Working Group and to the Board of Directors.
- Provide attendance data for pupil/parent/teacher meetings and for inclusion in the pupils' twice yearly school reports.
- Retain attendance records (including correspondence with parents) in line with Data Protection requirements (ie for a period of 3 years).
- Keep up-to-date with changes in attendance legislation and access Continuing Professional Development opportunities as appropriate.
- Notify the Local Authority via auto-export:
 - each half term of all pupils whose attendance is 90% or less.
 - of all starters (including 'non-shows') and all leavers that are outside of the usual admission/transition rounds.
- Notify the Local Authority, via individual return, of any pupils who have been placed on part-time timetables.
- Notify the Local Authority when a pupil reaches 20 unauthorised sessions of absence. Complete individual returns for such pupils advising of the actions taken to address absence.
- Notify the Local Authority when a pupil is to be deleted from the school roll where they:
 - have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
 - have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school;
 - have been certified by the school medical officer as 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 we do not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
 - have been permanently excluded.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Board of Directors

- The Directors have a valuable role to play in establishing the importance of school attendance matters and in supporting measures taken to improve attendance.
- There is a named Director, Zeena Bonds, with responsibility for attendance.
- The Directors will receive regular reports on attendance and monitor/analyse the school's progress towards targets and the effects of pupil absence upon attainment.
- The Board of Directors has a responsibility to ensure the school has an attendance policy and procedures in place
- The Board of Directors Working Groups will ratify statutory school policies; The Headteacher will ratify non-statutory school policies.

3 Apply the Attendance Policy and record/analyse pupil attendance data in a consistent and fair manner.

Recording Attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This takes place at the start of the morning session (by 9.00am) and afternoon session (at 1.15 pm). Registers close ten minutes later (9.10am and 1.25pm). The school operates a computerised registration system, inputting appropriate absence codes as required by the Department for Education. Paper registers are available from the School Office if necessary.

The school will be consistent in the collection and provision of information enabling attendance data to be analysed by authorised/unauthorised, class/year group, reason, gender etc

The school will analyse the effects of absence on attainment and report findings to parents and to the Board of Directors.

Authorised Absence is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.

Unauthorised Absence is when the school has not received a reason for absence or are unsatisfied with the reason given.

The school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Punctuality

It is important that children attend school on time. The start of school sessions are used to give out instructions or to organise work. If a child is late they can miss vital information from the class teacher, miss out on school work and cause disruption to the lesson for others. In addition, children can find late arrival in class embarrassing which may lead to possible further absence.

- The school bell rings at 8.50am and all pupils are expected to be in the playground by this time.
- A pupil will receive a late mark if they are not in the classroom by 9.00am/1.25pm when the registers are taken. Registers close 10 minutes later.
- Arrival after the close of registration without an exceptional reason will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with Department for Education guidance. This mark shows the child to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.

- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M' (unless they arrive before the close of registers). Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and may be subject to legal action.**

Absence for public performances or competing at regional, county or national level for sport.

Parents/carers must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of their child's participation and how learning will continue if absence occurs. The Headteacher and/or Board of Directors will decide whether to authorise such absences. A performance licence will be required for absences for public performances.

Requesting Leave of Absence

The Education (Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that **Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

A list as to what does and does not constitute exceptional circumstances is shown in Appendix 1

Parents/carers may be asked to provide evidence to support their exceptional circumstances.

There is no legal entitlement for leave in school time to go on holiday **and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised.**

Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence should fill in an application form Appendix 2 in advance of making any travel arrangements.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will **be unauthorised** and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Bournemouth Borough Council's Code of Conduct/Penalty Notice Handbook parent/carers may be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action in accordance the Code.

Persistent Absence (Poor or irregular attendance)

The Government measures our school on attendance and the numbers of Persistent Absence pupils.

Whatever the reasons for absence, the Department for Education deems a pupil to be a persistent absentee if they have 10% or more absence (of any kind) on any given day of the school year.

The school will write to these parents/carers, each half term, to alert them that their child is falling into the persistent absentee category. Parents/carers may also be invited in to a meeting to discuss attendance and agree steps that need to be taken to address and manage the child's absence. This may include providing the school with medical evidence for any future absence to be authorised. In cases where attendance is a concern a referral will be made to the Education Social Work Service.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Attendance data is shared with the Board of Directors, the Local Authority and the Department for Education.

Statutory duty to report absence

The school is aware of the importance of its duty with regard to **preventing radicalisation** of children, young people and their families and the need to alert the appropriate authorities of any long term absence. The school also has a statutory duty to report instances when a girl verbally discloses that she has been absent for Female Genital Mutilation.

Penalty Notices for Non Attendance and other Legal Measures

In Education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school. *Regular attendance is considered to be at least 96% in anyone one calendar year. Legally a pupil attends regularly when all absence is authorised.*

The school may use the full range of legal measures, including Penalty Notices, to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered through a referral to the Education Social Work Service.

Penalty Notices will be issued by Bournemouth Borough Council, on behalf of the school, in accordance with their Penalty Notice Code of Conduct. For each qualifying case of unauthorised absence the school or Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parent/carers** for each child. This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent. In education law a 'parent' includes all natural parents (whether married or not); any person who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child as defined in the Children Act 1989; any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child (ie a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child irrespective of what their relationship is to the child). This means that eg step-parents and grand-parents with whom the child lives may be considered as 'parents' and receive a penalty notice.

Each penalty notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days (as at 1 September 2016). Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices.

If the fine remains unpaid the Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance.

Please be aware that it is possible for parents/carers to be prosecuted for non-attendance at school without the need to first issue a penalty notice.

4 Promote effective partnerships with the Education Social Work Service and other services and agencies as required.

- The school encourages the active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the school.
- School Nurse 'Drop-ins' are held regularly in school, the dates of which are advertised in our newsletter. The School Nurse can also be contacted at Moordown Clinic, Tel 01202 518260. The Nurse is able to provide advice and guidance on health matters and recommend support to help improve attendance.
- The school will liaise with Education Social Work Service and other agencies as required.
- The school will carry out initial enquiries/interventions prior to referral, gathering and recording relevant information to assist the Education Social Work Service.

- The Education Social Work Service may arrange Parenting Contracts, School Attendance Orders, Education Supervision Orders, issue Penalty Notices and/or liaise with other agencies and professionals as appropriate.

5 Recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

- The school will be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of pupils returning to school after a significant period of absence.
- The school will involve the pupil, his/her parents/carers, school staff and other agencies (as appropriate) in the reintegration process.
- The school will provide opportunities for counseling and feedback.
- The school will consider peer support and mentoring.
- The school will agree a timescale for the review of the written reintegration plan.
- The school will provide guidance for teachers, teaching assistants etc who may be working with the child.

6. Legislation and Guidance

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

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

7. Links with other policies

This policy is consistent with the following school policies:

- Admissions
- Safeguarding and child protection
- Special educational needs
- Teaching and learning
- Behaviour (including anti-bullying)

8. Monitoring and review of policy

This policy has been carefully considered and ratified by the Headteacher on 15 November 2018.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, with the next review scheduled to take place during September 2019. However this will be brought forward should changes in protocol be recommended by either the Department for Education, the Local Authority or the Diocese.

Signed: 
Headteacher

Date: 16 November 2018

Appendix 1

Leave of absence in exceptional circumstance

Headteachers may only grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. The following are examples of agreed exceptional circumstances to guide Headteachers when considering leave of absence requests.

Before deciding whether to authorise leave of absence Headteachers will consider

- The impact on the student's academic progress of any absence
- The pupils attendance over the academic year
- Whether the leave falls within any key stage national tests or exams.

Examples of exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling - Headteachers should use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence - up to a maximum of 3 days.
- Serious illness of a close relative - only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional
- Teenage parents responsible for the care of their own child - at the Headteacher's discretion.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement and agreed by the LA - as appropriate. Bournemouth Education Social Work Service can advise schools on individual circumstances if required.
- Time-off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to a license being issued by Education Social Work Service
- Religious observance - The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs".
This would include the Islamic Eids, as well as religious observance days of the orthodox Christian, Jewish and other religions. Headteachers may specify that only one day will be authorised at a time (most of the families who request leave on religious grounds are Muslim and the request is for the two Eids).
- Weddings of parents and siblings - weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated, and in new relationships and it may cause a child further difficulties if he/she is excluded from a wedding. Each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Pilgrimages by parents (eg. Hajj). These are rare but can result in children being away from school for significant periods of time (at least 5 days). They are not regarded as exceptional as children themselves do not perform Hajj, but tend to travel with their parents when they go.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitment.

LEAVE IN TERM TIME REQUEST FORM



Before requesting leave in term time you need to think about:

- The lessons your child will miss
- The difficulty your child will have in catching up
- The effect it will have on your child's friendship groups
- The effect it will have on how well your child performs in school

For your information:

- Amendments have been made to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which took effect from 1 September 2013. From this date **schools will not be permitted to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**
- All term time holiday/leave requests must be submitted to the Headteacher with the exceptional circumstances fully explained. In order to make the decision whether to authorise leave or not, parents/carers may be asked to provide evidence supporting their circumstances.
- Parents/carers need to be aware that Penalty Notices can be issued per parent, per child for unauthorised absence from school, for unauthorised leave taken in term time and/or for pupils stopped during a Truancy Patrol (£60 if paid within 21 days; £120 if paid within 28 days as at 1 September 2013) in line with the Education (Penalty Notice Regulations) England 2013. The Council's Safeguarding and Social Inclusion Service will issue Penalty Notices on behalf of the Police, the Local Authority and the School.

Please complete and return to the School Office at least one week before the proposed leave

Name(s) of child(ren): Class(es):

.....
.....

Date of leave:

Dates of leave already requested this academic year:

Please provide a DETAILED reason why the leave MUST be taken during term time (continue overleaf in necessary):

Signed: (Parent/Carer) Print Name: Date:

Note: Leave is not authorised until signed confirmation has been received from the Headteacher

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY:

After careful consideration of your request:

- Leave not authorised - Penalty notice not to be issued on this occasion
- Leave not authorised - Consideration will be given to issuing Penalty notice if leave taken (see details above)
- Leave authorised

Comment:

Signed: (Headteacher) Date: