



Attendance Policy

This policy was reviewed in the Summer of 2015 in line with new guidelines issued in 2009 from DfE and recommendations from Tameside LA.

Statement of intent:

Livingstone Primary School is committed to monitoring and promoting attendance to pupils. We understand the impact that low attendance/persistent absence has on a child's educational progress and attitude. It can lead to poor attainment and can have an impact on their social skills, as it can lead to problems with a child forming/maintaining friendship groups and impact on good habits for the workplace.

For our children to get the most from their education, it is essential that they attend school regularly and on time. Regular absence will seriously affect a child's learning, and persistent lateness disrupts lessons and the learning of other children. Ensuring that pupils attend regularly and are punctual is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of staff.

The school aims to work together with parents to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend both regularly and punctually.

At Livingstone we will ensure that at every level, in all our work and throughout all aspects of the school community and its life, all will be treated equally, with respect and dignity, free from discrimination and harassment. Each person will be given fair and equal opportunities to develop their full potential regardless of their age, disability, gender, gender-identity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity (refers to staff / employment), socio-economic background and special educational needs. Our school will tackle the barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for these protected groups, ensuring there is equality of access and that we celebrate and value the diversity within our school community. The school will work actively to promote equality and foster positive attitudes and commitment to an education for equality.

Principles

- Regular and full time attendance is essential if children and young people are to benefit fully from their school life
- It is important that children learn the importance of being punctual as part of their preparation for adult life
- It is the parents/carers' responsibility to contact the school on the first day of an absence
- The school and parents/carers should work together in order to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to

- set out the ways by which attendance and punctuality are managed by the school
- clarify the role of the parents/carers

Parents' responsibilities:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.
- Parents should ensure that, if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as illness, they should contact the school as soon as possible, preferably on the first morning of absence. This may be done by phone, by letter or in person. Verbal messages on the parent's behalf from an adult relative or representative such as a childminder or friend may be accepted at the school's discretion on the first day of absence – subsequent absences must be explained by the parent. Verbal messages from children, e.g. siblings, will not be accepted. (See Appendix 1 – first day contact guidelines).

- Parents may not authorise their child's absence – only the school can do this, on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents. Should parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason, the school will record such absences as unauthorised. In some cases, this may be retrospective and authorisation may be withdrawn should circumstances arise leading the school to decide that the reason given was not truthful. If this occurs, this will be discussed with the parent.
- Parents should ensure that their child arrives on time for the start of registration (9 a.m.). Children arriving after 9.10 a.m. should report to the front office and the parent should sign the Late Book. (In the case of older unaccompanied children, the child should follow this procedure).
- Parents should avoid booking family holidays during term-time. From September 2013, the Headteacher no longer has the power to authorise term-time holidays. If a leave of absence is required, parents should complete an Application Form for Leave of Absence. Each case will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school or in excess of that agreed will be referred for sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

School responsibilities:

- The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress and personal wellbeing.
- Registers will be taken twice daily (at 9 o'clock and 1 o'clock). Registers will close at 9.30 and 1.30. Any child arriving after the close of the registration period will be recorded as "absent" for that session. Arrivals before registers close will be recorded as "late" but the child is considered present for the session.
- Teachers will complete registers in accordance with guidance given by the Headteacher. The Headteacher will inspect registers weekly in order to ensure that they are being satisfactorily maintained and to identify any potential attendance problems at an early stage. The Learning Mentor will inspect registers daily in order to ensure that they are being satisfactorily maintained and to identify any potential attendance problems at an early stage.
- Should a class teacher have any concerns about a child's attendance and punctuality, the Learning Mentor and Headteacher must be informed. This can be done in person or via a note in the register.
- Should a child be absent, the class teacher will enter the appropriate code in the register. Should no explanation have been received, the class teacher will inform staff in the office or the Headteacher, who will endeavour to make contact with the parent.
- All absence notes from parents should be dated and initialled by the class teacher and returned to the office with the register, where they will be stored. Only notes regarding absences where there are concerns need be brought to the attention of the Headteacher, who may then choose to speak to the parents.
- The Learning Mentor will regularly collect attendance data and use this during meetings with the Attendance Officer. These meetings will agree on attendance thresholds and targets and will identify tasks and follow-up actions for both the school and the Attendance Officer. Other agencies, such as Social Care, may also be involved.
- Livingstone Primary School will employ a number of strategies to promote regular attendance, including: publishing clear attendance information in the school's prospectus and website; communicating clearly with pupils and parents about the consequences of absence, persistent lateness, holidays in term time and truancy; reminding parents of their legal obligations and the potential sanctions eg Penalty Notices; appropriate personal encouragement for particular children; weekly class certificates; the publication of attendance data in the weekly newsletter; termly and annual certificates and rewards.

Persistent absentees:

Persistent absentees are defined as children whose attendance is below 85% and where unsatisfactory reasons are given for absence. However, the procedures outlined below may apply to children whose attendance is above 85% but where there are concerns about deteriorating attendance or where patterns are emerging, e.g. regular absences on particular days or persistent lateness. All of the above policy applies to persistent absentees, with the following additions:

- Children's names are recorded in the Persistent Absentee file in the front office. All class teachers are aware who these children are.
- Any messages received regarding absence of these children are recorded in this file.
- If no message is received, either the office staff or Headteacher must be informed and must attempt to contact the parent at the earliest opportunity. If no contact is made or the message received is unsatisfactory, the Mossley Schools Attendance Officer, Zoe Craker, must be contacted (01457 832491). Again, all this should be recorded in the PA file.

Absence at this level has considerable impact on a pupils' education and parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the school's Learning Mentor and the Attendance Officer in order to offer support, put together an action plan and involve other services if necessary. School need parent's fullest support and cooperation to tackle this. The child's attendance will continue to be monitored carefully. If a child is classed as Persistently Absent, future absences **will not** be authorised unless medical notes or other forms of proof are provided.

Understanding Attendance

Authorised Absence is when school is notified about pupil absence through a phone call or note by a parent. The absence has to be considered unavoidable e.g. illness, medical/dental appointments, days of religious observance, exceptional family circumstances such as bereavement.

A child who is absent for more than five days will be required to provide a medical note from a GP or consultant before we will authorise the absence.

Unauthorised Absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings, which include Fixed Penalty Notices, and is defined by the school as:

- Absences which do not relate to ill health or personal mitigating circumstances
- Absences that have never been explained
- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Holidays or day trips in term time which have not been authorised by the school
- Lateness – after 9:30

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. We can also use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse or the Early Help Team.

Punctuality is essential for a child to have a good start to the day. Poor punctuality is unacceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the school day, they will miss learning activities and important information or news that they may need during the day. Extreme lateness does not only disrupt the teacher leading the class, but disrupts other pupils' learning. Arriving late can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Lateness after 9:30 (when the registers officially close) will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. If a pupil is persistently late, i.e five unauthorised late marks where pupils have arrived after 9.30am the Learning Mentor will contact parents and arrange a Punctuality panel to meet with her and the Attendance Officer if necessary. If a child has ten late marks after 9:30 they will be referred to Education Welfare to receive a Fixed Penalty Notice. Once the referral has been made, Education Welfare will monitor the child's punctuality via the electronic system (SIMS).

The register will be amended on the electronic registration system (SIMS) during the day, with the appropriate absence codes. This system is used to provide many different reports and types of data to help school monitor attendance effectively.

The school's Learning Mentor and Headteacher will work together to review the attendance of all pupils regularly. This is when pupils who are a cause for concern will be identified. The Learning Mentor will look at the registers everyday and will note any problems with identified families. Action will be taken on a daily basis, such as telephone calls, letters sent; however, any child whose attendance is a 'cause for concern' will be referred to the Attendance Officer. A letter will be sent to parents of any pupil who has been identified as having low attendance, in order to offer support and address any concerns that may be impacting on the pupil attending school. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored, and if there is no improvement parents will be asked to attend an Attendance Panel to discuss the issue.

Our school has a legal duty to promote attendance and ensure that our pupils are accessing their education. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils to ensure we have the best possible level of attendance.

Registers

The method of maintaining the class registers is through Optical Mark Reader sheets and then the information is transferred to the SIMs Attendance Module. The codes used are taken from the Absence and Attendance Codes: Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities (2009)

/ Present (AM)	I Illness (not medical/dental appointments)	T Traveller absence
\ Present (PM)	J Interview	U Late (after registers closed)
B Educated off site	L Late (before reg closed)	V Educational visit or trip
C Other authorised circumstances	M Medical / Dental appointments	W Work experience
D Dual Registration (attending other estab)	N No reason yet provided for absence	# School closed to pupils & staff
E Excluded (no alternative provision made)	O Unauthorised absence (not covered by other code)	Y Partial and forced closure
	P Approved sporting activity	X Non-compulsory school age absence
G Family Holiday (not agreed or days in excess of agreement)	R Religious observance	Z Pupil not on roll
	S Study leave	- All should attend / No mark recorded

Registers close at 9.30a.m. Lateness after this time is classed an unauthorised absence unless it is for a medical appointment or a reason is provided which can be authorised by the Headteacher.

Holidays

The Department for Education (DfE) has important amendments to legislation surrounding holidays in term time. From 1 September 2013, the law gives NO ENTITLEMENT to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.

Medical Appointments

Parents/carers must sign their child(ren) out and back in again when attending appointments during the school day.

If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it has been agreed with the Headteacher.

Taken from Tameside Council website

Schools in Tameside will:-

- Identify a designated member of the Senior Leadership Team to take responsibility for all attendance matters, including the setting and regular review of targets for the whole school, year/class groups and individual pupils.
- Implement efficient systems of registration which encourage children and parents/carers to account promptly for any absences.
- Ensure absences are only authorised where the school are satisfied that the absence was genuine.

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Next Review: June 2017

- Provide a written school policy which sets a school target for improving attendance with reference to The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007.
- Develop attendance incentive schemes (individual and group awards etc.) in accordance with the needs of the school.
- Highlight important dates such as SATs in newsletters, letters home etc.
- Explain to pupils how poor attendance can impact on attainment.
- Monitor how the curriculum and ethos of the school impact on school attendance.
- Implement correct policy for children who are educated other than at school.
- Have an agreed policy that no holidays in term time will be authorised.
- Any unauthorised absence of 10 sessions or 5 school days or more should be referred to the ATTENDANCE OFFICER in line with Tameside's Code of Conduct for the use of Fixed Penalty Notices.
- Support the statutory role of the EWS and the school's attendance officer by ensuring advice and guidance is sought before undertaking any further supportive work with a pupil during the term.
- Put in place monitoring and referral procedures which ensure that children whose attendance is a cause for concern are identified early.
- Provide support through the school's own pastoral systems, including appropriate contact with parents/carers.
- Analyse attendance data, looking for emerging patterns of non-attendance.
- Provide the LA with accurate attendance data as required.

The School will:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority
- Provide 190 days education a year
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and their presence is valued
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality using newsletters and other communications to parents/carers
- Encourage parents/carers to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored and absences are followed up promptly
- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Traveller Education, Health, Social Services etc)
- Record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress and personal well being
- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality
- Ensure information is available for Governors and parents/carers
- Ensure good liaison where a change of school occurs
- Have procedures in place to help children settle in after a long absence

Strategies to Promote and Maintain High Standards of Attendance and Punctuality

- All new parents/carers are introduced to the Policy and information on attendance in the School Prospectus
- The weekly newsletter is used as a vehicle to promote this aspect of school life and serves as a reminder when necessary
- Individual parents/carers are informed where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality
- Maintain and promote a set of class rules which refer to punctuality and readiness for work
- Attendance certificates to reward children for 100% attendance are given at the end of every term and academic year

We expect the parent/carer to:

- Ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis
- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address
- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of the absence. This may be done by phone, letter or in person (*See appendix 1 – First day contact guidelines*)
- Contact the school after the first day of absence to advise the school if the absence is continuing
- In cases of lengthy absence, keep the school well informed so that work can be sent home in certain cases and in order for the school to be prepared for the child's return
- Provide a note indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day

- Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child
- Avoid taking holidays in term time.

Children Missing in Education

A child going missing from school is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Where a child is repeatedly absent from school, especially for long periods, it could indicate potential safeguarding issues such as travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Schools have a duty to monitor children that go missing, particularly on repeat occasions, and report them to their designated safeguarding lead – following their normal safeguarding procedures.

All schools are required to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers. In order to ensure accurate data is collected to allow effective safeguarding, **all schools** must inform the LA of any pupil who will be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home education (In the case of home education, a written confirmation must be received from the parents before LA is notified and children are removed from roll).
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a 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 before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the school does not reasonably believe they will be returning at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.

School must inform the LA of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more. Schools must pursue all possible routes to ascertain the whereabouts of a child including a home visit before informing the LA.

Appendix 1 – First Day Contact Guidelines

First day contact is a widely used practice in schools and has been shown to improve attendance rates. The correct procedure at Livingstone is as follows:

1. As soon as the registers are returned to the office, a member of staff checks absentees against messages received.
2. For persistent absentees, see the relevant section above. For other pupils for whom no message has been received, staff will attempt to make contact with the parent at the earliest opportunity.
3. When contact is made, the parent will be asked for the reason for absence. In the event that no proper reason is supplied, the parent will be informed that the absence will not be authorised.
4. In the case of minor ailments, the parent will be encouraged to send the child in with an assurance that school will keep a close eye on him/her. *(NB – if there has been a spate of certain symptoms in the school or community, such minor illnesses may be treated as a valid reason for absence).*
5. Where no contact is made, a message should be left asking the parent to contact the school. Where it is impossible to leave a message, a note should be sent.
6. Reasons for absence are then added to the register.

Appendix 2 – requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to maximise their educational opportunities. Interruptions in school attendance disrupt continuity of learning and have a negative impact on attainment.

It is the school's responsibility to provide the best education possible. We can only do this if child/ren attend regularly. There is a direct correlation between achievement and attendance, well before GCSE.

The Government's guidance states that only under **exceptional circumstances** may the Headteacher consider giving permission for a child to be absent from school. Such requests should be made on the appropriate form, available from the school office.

Requests for holidays will not be granted.

In line with national and local guidance the school would like to outline clearly when permission will **not** be granted:-

- During transition time as a pupil is settling into the school.
- Before or during Year 6 SATs or important revision periods leading up to these.
- If the pupil has attendance **below 95 %**.
- If the pupil already has unauthorised absences.

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Penalty Notices for failure to ensure regular school attendance. **Parents or Carers who take their children on holiday in term time may receive a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per child, which must be paid within 21 days.** If payment is made within 28 days, the fine increases to £120 per parent per child. Where a fine remains unpaid after 42 days, the matter will be referred to the Borough Solicitor, who will consider instigating criminal proceedings.

Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued after 10 unauthorized absences in a 12-week period – this is 10 registration periods, i.e. 5 days. Children who are late without good reason after registration closes (9.30) also receive an unauthorized absence mark.

Appendix 3 – Penalty Notices – Letter to parents



Mossley & Carrbrook School's Partnership
Mossley Hollins High School
Buckton Vale Primary School
Livingstone Primary School
Micklehurst All Saints CE Primary School
Milton St John's CE Primary School
St George's C.E Primary School

REMINDER

Dear Parent /Carer

Please find below important information from the Local Authority that we are required to share with all parents concerning absence from School.

It is for information only and outlines the actions that could be taken against parents/carers regarding attendance.

Penalty Notices for Non- school attendance:

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. This means that when a pupil has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more, in any 12 week period (where no acceptable reason has been given for the absence) or if their child persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration, their parents or carers may receive a Penalty Notice fine. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences. Each fine is £60 if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Failure to make the payment will result in the Local Authority taking legal action for failure to ensure regular attendance at school under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996.

In law, an offence occurs if a parent or carer fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Livingstone Primary School, in conjunction with Tameside Education Welfare Service and Greater Manchester Police, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

Parents may also receive a Penalty Notice without a warning letter for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance for the following reasons:

- If their child is stopped on a truancy sweep more than once.
- If they go on holiday in term time.
- If they have not co-operated with the Head Teacher and Attendance Manager and/or Education Welfare following a referral from school after they have taken steps to address the absences with the parent/carer and pupil.
- If their child fails to return to school following a fixed term exclusion.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 also makes it an offence if a parent fails to ensure that their child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion. Penalty Notices may be issued in relation to this matter.

The Local Authority and schools are committed to providing the best possible future for your child. If you have concerns about your child's attendance at school or if you are experiencing any difficulties, contact the school and ask for help.

Yours sincerely

Miss R Willard
Head Teacher