

Mottram Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Attendance Policy

Mottram CE (Aided) Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. It is very important that you make sure your child attends regularly. This policy sets out how together we can achieve this.

At Mottram CE (Aided) Primary School we:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school

For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school. Your child should be at school, on time, every day unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of others in the same class.

It is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure punctual and regular school attendance set out in Section 4441 of the 1996 Education Act. Absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution under Section 4441 or 441a of the 1996 Education Act.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us focus on this we will:

- give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- report to parents/carers every half term, in effort cards, on how their child is performing in school and provide details of their attendance and punctuality rate
- contact parents/carers should a child's attendance fall below 94%
- celebrate and reward good and improving attendance in school through class competitions and awards

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, such as, illness or medical treatment which unavoidably fall in school time.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to Tameside Council using legal proceedings. Unauthorised absence includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- daytrips and holidays in term time
- haircuts, looking after siblings

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, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend school, it is never best to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Processes for managing and supporting good attendance

Leave of Absence

From 1st September 2013 the law relating to term time holidays by pupils at maintained schools and special schools not maintained by a local authority is set out in Regulation 7 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

From 1st September 2013 Headteachers are no longer able to authorise any absence for the purpose of a holiday in term time. The new law gives parents/carers no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time. If parents/carers take their child out of school when the absence is unauthorised, a fixed penalty notice may be issued to parents/carers.

Monitoring attendance patterns

We aim for outstanding attendance and to achieve this we carry out regular analysis of attendance data (including both authorised and unauthorised absence).

We use this information to support good attendance following the steps below:

1. Where a child has a pattern of absence that raises cause for concern and attendance drops to 94%, school will contact parents/carers to let them know; this will either be by phone or by letter depending upon the circumstance and nature of the absence.
2. If absence continues to be a concern, parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss the reasons for absence and to try to solve the problem together. The following points will be considered to determine the most appropriate course of action:
 - a. The number and frequency of absences
 - b. The number of authorised and unauthorised periods of absence (including unauthorised holidays in term time)
 - c. The pattern of absences
 - d. The impact on the child's learning
 - e. The nature of any illness and need for a doctor or other medical advice to support the discussion
3. If the problem cannot be successfully addressed within school then the School Nurse and/or the Education Welfare Officer from Tameside Council can be asked to help resolve the situation.
4. Where attendance falls below 85% this is classified as persistent absence. If this happens parents/carers will be notified. Where parents/carers are in agreement a strategy will be put into place to improve the attendance and intervention from the Educational Welfare Officer may be required.
5. A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their percentage attendance reaches 85% for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents/carers fullest support and cooperation to tackle this. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All PA cases are made known to the EWO and Tameside Local Authority, and all are put on first day contact (Whenever possible, a member of the school administration team will contact home before 10am).

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us by telephone as soon as possible on the first day of absence and any subsequent days following or parents/carers can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.
- On the child's return to school, parents/carers must send a note in explaining the reasons for the absence. This must be done even if parents/carers have already informed school by telephone.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone, email or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by 9:30am.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation in with the Headteacher or Inclusion Manager, if absences persist.
- Consider issuing a Penalty Warning if attendance continues to be an issue.

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out this way, the school may refer the child to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Tameside Local Authority, who will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the Child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, school may request sanctions such as Penalty Warnings, Penalty Notices or prosecutions at the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or Local Authority. If parents/carers take a child out of school for a period of unauthorised extended leave, the child may be removed from the school roll.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons and it can be embarrassing for a child when walking into a lesson when it has already begun. It can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through school life into the wider world.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at 9:00am and we expect the children to arrive at school before this time. At 8:50 teaching staff enter the playground to meet and greet children.

Registers are marked at the start of school every day and your child will receive a late mark if they arrive in school after 9:05am. If a child is not in school by 9:05am on five separate occasions in a term, parents/carers will be sent a letter outlining the need to improve their child's punctuality.

Registers are closed at 9:15am. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will count as a 'late after registers have closed' mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Warning if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher or Inclusion Manager to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

School targets, projects and special initiatives

Our attendance target as set out by the Governing Body of Mottram CE (Aided) Primary School is 97%. Through newsletters we will keep you updated regularly about our latest attendance figures. Our target is to reach and exceed our target because we believe that good attendance is the key to successful learning.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects that will focus on these areas will be provided in our Newsletters and we ask you for your full support.

Those people responsible for attendance matters at Mottram CE (Aided) Primary School:

Mrs Scattergood, Acting Head Teacher
Natalie Diveney, Inclusion
Karen Johnson, School Business Manager
Sarah Davies, Administrative Assistant

People responsible for this policy and its implementation:

Mrs Scattergood, Acting Head Teacher