



The Mosley Academy Attendance Policy



INTRODUCTION

At The Mosley Academy we believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is important too, that children arrive and leave school on time. It is equally important that children should not be at school if they are unwell.

The Mosley Academy is a happy school. Our school ethos reflects our belief that children learn best in an encouraging and happy atmosphere. Every member of the school staff show concern and care about each child's welfare.

As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better 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 may make things worse.

Pupils are not expected to attend on INSET days when school is closed to pupils.

It is always the aim to keep school open to pupils every day of the academic year. However, the head teacher and Governors reserve the right to close school to pupils in the event of unforeseen or circumstances beyond its control (for example critical incidents, health and safety reasons etc). In such situations school will make every effort to inform parents as soon as possible of such closure.

Absences

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason: illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- a family holiday

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful.

Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised.

Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. 100% attendance is certainly possible, but in the event of your child being away from school it is essential that you, the parent inform the school of the reasons for absence.

WHY?

The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient fulltime education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).

Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.

Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)

There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.

The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents, guardians or carers, the school with its Governing Body and the Local Authority.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning.

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- This Policy is designed to help all concerned adults to enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible in order to achieve as highly as they can both academically and socially.
- Meet the Government attendance targets set for us. to maintain the school's outstanding levels of attendance
- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Make suitable arrangements for the safe, daily reception of children.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school: initially with a first-day absence telephone call.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness
- To report to the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) and support their work with pupils as necessary
- To report to the Government on attendance
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- To promote good attendance

REGISTERS

Teachers mark registers at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. They are marked in ink. The appropriate letter code is inserted in the absence mark when it is known. Registers must be completed by a member of staff and must not be completed by pupils.

Attendance is recorded electronically for each pupil, in SIMs.

At the end of the week the totals are inserted and absences recorded.

Annual totals are entered at the end of the academic year. An attendance figure is calculated for the annual return to the authority.

ATTENDANCE DATA

The head teacher analyses individual pupil attendance and that of vulnerable groups of children termly. These figures are reported to governors. Pupil's attendance rates are discussed with parents at parents' consultation evenings and reported on Pupils' End of Year Reports. Where a pupil's attendance rate falls below the school or national average, the head teacher or class teacher informs parents and discusses actions to improve the attendance rate.

Where staff are concerned about a pupils' rate or pattern of attendance they may seek advice or notify the Educational Welfare Service.

REWARDS - Children with 100% attendance through the year are rewarded with a book at the end of the school year. Certificates are also used to promote 100% attendance each term.

APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Parents may ask for permission to take their child/ren away from school in term time. All requests must be made in writing using The Mosley Academy Application for Pupil Leave of Absence Form' (see attached).

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day at 8.50 a.m.
- To inform school on **every** day of any absence.
- To make applications for leave in exceptional circumstances in writing on the Academy's 'Leave Of Absence Form' , giving the reason for the request with as much notice as possible.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.
- If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:
 - Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving
 - Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE - Parents are asked to telephone the school on the first day of absence before 8.50am to inform the school that their child will not be attending. Parents must give reasons for the absence and an indication of when a child might be expected to return to school. A log of the telephone call must be made by the member of staff and passed to the Office Services Manager. The member of staff taking the message should then inform the relevant class teacher. Written confirmation for reasons of absence are also requested (but not mandatory if telephone notifications are logged).

- When a child is absent from school but no notification has been received, every effort is made to contact the parents to establish the child's location and reason for non-attendance

THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The Academy School Secretary will log instances of absence and lateness and the headteacher will analyse regularly. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

Stage 1: Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will make verbal contact with home.

Stage 2: If the concerns persist the school will write to the parents/carers.

Stage 3: If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, school representative and the Parent Support . Education Welfare Officer to deal with the on-going issues. Please note that ultimately the Academy can take legal action.

ABSENCES DURING TERM TIME

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states: Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Leave of

absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child. AS OF 1ST SEPTEMBER 2013, THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS.

If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for leave of absence during term time'.

There are approximately 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.

LATENESS

Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.

- Children must be in class by 8.50 a.m. each day.
- Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken.
- The school gates will be shut by 9am. Children who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office, where they will be entered into the late book.
- Lateness will be monitored by the headteacher and the E.W.O. (Education Welfare Officer) will follow this up.
- If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed at 9.20am the pupil will receive a 'U'. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. 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. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the Attendance Officer.

SICKNESS

- Please notify the school on each day of the absence.
- We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.
- Parents are requested not to send pupils to school for a period of 24 hours following incidents of sickness and/or stomach upsets.

- In the event that a child becomes so unwell during the school day that they are unable to participate in lessons and activities, parents will be contacted and requested to collect their child from school.
- The school has an obligation to contact the county Health and Safety advisory team of occurrences of notifiable diseases, under Health and Safety Guidelines.

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
Families First Targeted Services

Version: August 2013

STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITY
Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices

Rationale:

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. In recognition of this, the law makes it an offence for a parent or carer to fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a school at which the child is a registered pupil, without good reason or the agreement of the school.

Penalty Notices are one of the sanctions available for this offence and offer a means of swift intervention, which can be used to combat attendance problems before they become entrenched.

Parents and children will be supported by their school/alternative provision, the Local Support Teams for Targeted Services and, as appropriate, other Partner Agencies, to overcome barriers to regular attendance, through a range of intervention strategies.

Therefore, Penalty Notices and other sanctions will only be used where parental co-operation with this process is either absent or deemed to be insufficient to resolve the problem. They will be used as a means to support and challenge parents to meet their legal responsibilities and where there is a reasonable expectation that their use will secure improved school attendance.

Legal Framework:

Section 23 of the Anti-Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated Local Authority (LA) officers, Headteacher (deputy and assistant Headteacher authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

The Education Penalty Notices (England) Regulations 2004 (As amended)

The Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The Education Act 1996.

The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform to all requirements of the Human Rights Act and equal opportunities legislation.

In law, an offence occurs if a parent fails to secure their child's attendance at school and that absence is not authorised by the school.

Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under s444 Education Act 1996 or s36 Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

As a result, the Local Authority has responsibility for developing a local code of conduct that will govern how all of the partners named in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, will issue Penalty Notices.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
- Use of Penalty Notice will be restricted to one notice per parent of a pupil per academic year¹.
- In cases where there is more than one poorly-attending pupil in a family, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.
- There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent may receive a formal warning of a possible Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of following criteria are met:

- At least 20 sessions (10 school days) lost due to unauthorised absence during the current and previous term. These absences do not need to be consecutive.
- Unauthorised absences of a least 10 sessions (5 school days) due to a leave of absence (inc. holiday related) in term time not agreed by the Headteacher / Principal (or delegated person) of children whose attendance is already below 87% in the current academic year or the previous academic term.
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed, in the current and previous term. "Persistent" means at least 20 sessions of late arrival.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspection Act 2006.

The Local Authority will only issue Penalty Notices requested by a school in response to an unapproved leave of absence (Inc. holiday related) resulting in unauthorised absence where the school has informed the LST prior to the unauthorised absence of its intention to request a Penalty Notice and has provided the necessary paperwork.

This paperwork should comprise:

- A copy of the newsletter or letter sent to all parents during the current academic year which clearly states that parents may receive a Penalty Notice for an unauthorised holiday in term time. (The LA do not need a hard copy of this newsletter/letter each time a school applies for an unauthorised holiday Penalty Notice, just on the first occasion each academic year.)

¹ Continued poor attendance in the same academic year can be addressed by other statutory actions available to the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996.

- A copy of the leave of absence (Holiday) Request Form submitted by parent, and a copy of the response sent to the parent by school. In the event the leave of absence (holiday) request is being denied the school's response should state the reason why the request is unauthorised and should again advise parent that they may receive a Penalty Notice if they take their child out of school and that the school has referred the matter to the Local Support Team (representing the Local Authority).

- Relevant pupil Attendance of Registration Certificate.
- Signed certificate from the Headteacher / Principal - or their nominated deputy - confirming that non-attendance during the period was unauthorised.
- Completed school unauthorised absence checklist and signed penalty notice request form.

In the case of an excluded child, a copy of the warning letter required to be sent to parent(s) pursuant to s.104 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 warning them to ensure that the child is not permitted to be present in a public place in the first five days of exclusion. In the case of an excluded child, adequate evidence that the child was in the public place, including the date and time.

A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

Who May Issue a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice may only be issued by:

- Authorised LA staff. In Staffordshire this will be members of the Local Support Teams.
- Headteacher / Principal and school staff authorised by them may request Local Support Teams to issue a penalty notice.
- A Police officer during a truancy sweep under the provision of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 may request a Local Support Team (LST) to write a notice.

Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices:

The designated officers within Targeted Services Locality Support Teams (LST) will be the only individuals permitted to issue Penalty Notices in the Staffordshire area. This will ensure consistent and equitable delivery, avoid duplication of issue, to allow schools to maintain good relationships with parents and ensure that they reinforce other enforcement sanctions.

Penalty Notices will only be issued by post and never as an instant action, e.g. during a Truancy Sweep. This will enable officers to ensure that all evidential requirements are in place, duplication of issue is avoided and limit the health and safety risks associated with delivering such Notices by hand.

Where Schools, Academies, Police or neighbouring local authorities ask Staffordshire County Council to issue a Penalty Notice, their request will be investigated and actioned by the LST provided that:

- The circumstances of the case meet the criteria specified in this Code of Conduct.
- The pupil is registered at a Staffordshire School;
- All necessary evidence is provided to the LST to establish that an offence under Section 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

- Issuing a Penalty Notice would not conflict with another intervention strategy already in place or another enforcement sanction already being processed; and
- There is a reasonable expectation that the use of a Penalty Notice would improve the child's school attendance.

The LST will respond to all requests within 10 school days of receipt or if part of ongoing casework, and where satisfied that all of the relevant criteria are met, will:

- Issue an initial warning to the parent (s) of the possibility of Penalty Notice being issued;
- Set a period of 20 school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence and give the parent (s) an opportunity to respond; this information will be included in the formal written warning letter.
- After due consideration of the facts of the case, only issue a Penalty Notice through the post at the end of the 20 day period, if the required level of improved school attendance has not been achieved.

Where the Penalty Notice is requested from a school in response to a leave of absence (holiday) related unauthorised absence, or is in relation to an offence under section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the formal warning letter and 20 day improvement period will not apply.

All Penalty Notices will be entered onto a database maintained by Targeted Services to assure that no duplicate Penalty Notices are issued.

Excluded Pupils

The parent of the excluded pupil must ensure that the pupil is not present in a public place at any time during school hours on a day that he / she is excluded, up to and including the first 5 days or, where that exclusion is for a fixed period of 5 days or less, any of the days to which the exclusion relates.

If the excluded pupil is present in a public place at any time during school hours on a school day specified above the parent commits an offence under section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

Truancy Sweep

A Penalty Notice will only be issued after due consideration when all facts are known and the threshold for serving the notice has been met.

Information is given to anyone stopped on a truancy sweep, pupil and/or parent about the possible support and sanctions used to address non-attendance.

Procedure for withdrawing Penalty Notices:

Once issued a Penalty Notice may be withdrawn if the Targeted Services LST is satisfied that:

- The Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person;
- The use of the Penalty Notice did not conform to this Code of Conduct.
- The Penalty Notice was delivered to the wrong address;
- The evidence demonstrates that the Penalty Notice should not have been issued, e.g. medical evidence;
- The exceptional circumstances of the case warrant its withdrawal.

Payment of Penalty Notices:

- Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice;
- Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent's or carer's liability for the period in question and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered by the Penalty Notice;
- Payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 and payment after this time but within 28 days is £120; and
- The Academy retains any revenue from Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs (collection or prosecuting in the event of non-payment).
- Payments will not be accepted in part or by instalments.

Non-payment of Penalty Notices:

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will result in the withdrawal of the Penalty Notice and will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of section 444(1), of the Education Act 1996.

Policy and Publicity

- Identifying information about Penalty Notices issued to particular parent's or specific children should not be made public;
- Issuing of Penalty Notices as a sanction is included in the Authority's Attendance Policy;
- All school Attendance Policies should include information on the issuing of Penalty Notices and this will be brought to the attention of all parents;
- The LA will include information on the use of Penalty Notices and other attendance enforcement sanctions in promotional or public information material.

Reporting & Review:

Targeted Services will:

- report at regular intervals to the Headteacher Forum groups (Primary, Secondary, Middle and Special). and Staffordshire Police on the deployment and outcomes of Penalty Notices;
- make regular reports to Staffordshire County Council on attendance matters which will include Penalty Notice use; and
- review Penalty Notice use at regular intervals and amend the Protocol as appropriate.

Representation

There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

The parent will be advised when they receive the warning that they may make representation to the Strategic Lead of Targeted Services setting out reasons why they should not have been issued.

AJ Jan 2015