

# Maidensbridge Primary School



## Attendance Policy

**Approved by:** Mrs K Thomas (Headteacher)      **Date:** February 18<sup>th</sup> 2022

**Approved by  
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### 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

At Maidensbridge Primary School, we are a ‘Good’ school (Ofsted 2017) and we expect ‘good attendance’ (Above 96%) from all pupils and staff.

This policy will stipulate how as parents, staff and children we can achieve this, aiming for a school attendance of 96% or above.

### 2. 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.

### **3. School procedures**

#### **3.1 Attendance register**

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken as soon as the children arrive in the morning. The morning registration period will close at 8.55am. Between 8.45 and 8.55, children will receive a late mark (L). Children arriving after this time will receive an unauthorised absence mark (U). The register for the second session will be taken at the beginning of the afternoon session, which will vary for each year group due to staggered lunchtimes.

#### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

This can be done by calling the school office on 01384 818405 and leaving a voice message that will be checked by the office before 9.30am. If a child is not in school and there is not a message about absence from a parent by 9.30am a phone call to the parent will be made on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of absence to ascertain the reason.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The office should be informed of a planned medical or dental appointment for a child, either by letter or phone call. 01384 818405.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. This will be between the times of 8.45am and 8.55am.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed (after 8.55am) will be marked as an unauthorised absence, using the appropriate code.

### **3.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

School requires an emergency contact number **for more than one person for each child**, as good practice and these should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. Doing so provides school with additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing school and is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

**Safeguarding:** - A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, we will work within all statutory polices regarding Safeguarding Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education, of which the key principles relating to attendance are:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children have the best life chances.

As a school we also have a duty to identify any children who may be considered '**Children Missing Education.**' This is any child, of statutory school age, who has continuously missed 10 days of school, without the school's permission. In this case, the Local Authority would be informed.

School also has a legal duty to inform the Local Authority when a child is being added or removed from the school register, other than in usual movement at the start and end of the academic year.

**Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter.**

### **3.6 Reporting to parents**

A child's attendance record will be reported on annually as part of their end of year report.

## **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

### **4.2 Legal sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

## **5. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Good attendance and punctuality will be praised in many ways, for example certificates for 100% attendance, praise in assemblies, class rewards for the best attendance each week as well as individual rewards for improved attendance.

Mrs K Thomas will be monitoring the attendance on a weekly basis and sharing this information with the pupils, staff and parents.

## **6. Attendance monitoring**

The attendance officer (Mrs K Thomas- Headteacher) monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

**Unless this is for Coronavirus isolation of 10 days.**

Appendix 2 shows the letter templates that will be used to contact parents about a child's absence, attendance and punctuality.

Letter 1 will be issued when a child's attendance falls to 95% this will then be discussed with the parents and the Headteacher to devise a plan for improvement.

Letters 2-8 show what will be sent out to parents in situations of high unauthorised absences and poor punctuality. For example continual lateness after 8.55am in the morning.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer. The Education Investigation Service would aim to communicate with the family and support an improvement in attendance. If an improvement isn't seen, penalties may be issued. Early Help may also be offered at this time to support the family.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. This is any child with an attendance of 90% or less.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

As a school, attendance will be monitored weekly for whole school attendance as well as by groups eg class/girls/boys/SEN/PP to analyse whether there is a particular issue having an impact on these pupils.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **7.2 The Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.3 The Attendance Officer (Mrs K Thomas – Headteacher)**

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- issue fixed-penalty notices through the Local Authority

#### 7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 8.55am and no later than 10 minutes after their afternoon registration start.

#### 7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system and check the voicemails before 9.30am for messages relating to attendance.

### 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

### 9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Complies with UK GDPR Regulations

### Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed between 8.45am and 8.55am
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational

		activity approved by the school
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness. <b>Now used for a child absent with confirmed coronavirus.</b>
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller	Pupil from a Traveller community is

	absence	travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed. After 8.55am.

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend <b>Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (Covid-19) This code is used while children are waiting for test results to confirm a negative or positive infection.</b>
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2- Example Letters for absence, attendance and punctuality



### Letter 1 – Concerns about a pupil's high level of absence

#### Absences from school

I'm writing to express my concern at [name's] recent high levels of absence from school.

[His/her] current attendance has fallen to [percentage]. Falling below 95% attendance will likely have an impact on [his/her] academic achievement.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help [him/her] to address gaps in learning due to absence.

I therefore request that you contact the school office on [number] as soon as you can to discuss this.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Headteacher



## Letter 2 – Concerns about a pupil's unauthorised absence(s)

### Unauthorised absences from school

I'm writing to express my concern at [name's] recent unauthorised [absence/absences] from school. [Name] has been absent from school for a total of [number] unauthorised sessions ([number] days) on the following dates:

[date]

[date]

[date]

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

**Amend the line below based on your local authority's code of conduct for penalty notices:**

Unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has more than [number] unauthorised absences within [time period]. More information about penalty notices is available in the school's attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website, or available from the school office.

I therefore request that you contact the school office on [number] as soon as you can to discuss this.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Headteacher



## Letter 3 – Formal notice about unauthorised absence

### Unauthorised absence

With reference to our letter dated [date], [name] has now had a total of [number] unauthorised absences within [time period]. These absences occurred on the following dates:

[date]

[date]

[date]

In line with our attendance policy, and the local authority's code of practice, we'll now request a penalty notice be issued by the local authority.

On receipt of the notice, you must pay:

£60, if paid within 21 days

£120, if paid between 21 and 28 days from the date of the notice

If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action.

We would also like to invite you in for a meeting with [appropriate member of staff], to discuss how we can support you to help improve [name's] attendance.

Please contact the school office on [number] urgently to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Headteacher



## Letter 4 – Accepting a request for a holiday in term-time

### Unauthorised absence

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school between [date] and [date].

In this case, I'm prepared to agree to your request.

I haven't made this decision lightly. Our school is dedicated to the education of all our pupils and believes regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

Each request for a holiday absence is considered on its merits at the time. Please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent and does not mean I'll agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Headteacher



## Letter 5 – Declining a request for a holiday in term-time

### Your request for a holiday absence

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school between [date] and [date].

In this case I regret I cannot consent to your request.

Our school, while acknowledging that each family's circumstances are different, is dedicated to the education of all our pupils and believes regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

I have not made this decision lightly. A request for an absence is considered on its merits at the time and many variables are taken into consideration.

Because each request is unique, my decision in this instance cannot be directly compared with decisions made by the school in the past, and nor does it set a precedent. It does not mean I'll not agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

I'm sorry to have to disappoint you.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Headteacher



## Letter 6 – After an unauthorised holiday

### Holiday absence

I'm writing about your action in taking [name(s)] out of school for a family holiday between [date] and [date].

We're treating this as an unauthorised holiday because [explain the evidence you have].

Our school works with parents to provide the best education for each child and believes that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

We expect you to consult the school before booking holidays that mean your child will be absent, or before making any plans that will involve your child's absence from lessons or other commitments.

If in line with your local authority's code of conduct for penalty notices, add:

We have the power to request that the local authority issue a penalty notice for unauthorised term-time holidays.

If issued with a penalty notice, you must pay:

£60, if paid within 21 days of receiving the notice

£120, if paid after 21 days, but before 28 days

If you don't pay the penalty within 28 days, the local authority could pursue legal action.

Continue with:

Absences like these could have a detrimental effect on [name(s)] education.

We would like to arrange a meeting so that we can discuss this further. Please contact the school office urgently on [phone number].

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Headteacher



## Letter 7 – Accepting a request for absence for religious observance

### Your request for absence for religious observance

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school on [date] because of [religious occasion].

In this case, I'm prepared to agree to your request and it will be considered an authorised absence.

Each request for an absence is considered on its merits at the time. We recognise that a family's religious beliefs and traditions are intrinsic to their sense of identity. However, please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent, and does not necessarily mean I'll agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Headteacher



## Letter 8 – Concern about punctuality

### Poor punctuality

I'm writing to you because [name] has been late to school [number] times in [timeframe].

[He/she] arrived at school after the register had closed on the following dates:

[date]

[date]

[date]

[He/she] also arrived at school late (but before the register had closed) on the following dates:

[date]

[date]

[date]

The school day begins promptly at [time] and registration closes at [time]. Afternoon registration takes place between [time slot].

Arriving promptly makes sure that your child doesn't miss work, and that disruption to the teacher and other pupils is minimised. Persistent lateness can lead to a significant loss in learning time.

**Amend the following sentence in line with your local authority's code of conduct for penalty notices:**

Persistent lateness can result in a penalty notice. The school can request that the local authority issues a penalty notice related to lateness when:

[conditions set out in your local authority's code of practice]

We're committed to working with families to make sure every pupil gets the support they need. We would therefore like to arrange a meeting to discuss how we can work with you to help improve [name's] punctuality.

Please contact the school office on [number] to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Headteacher