Marden Bridge Middle School

Empowering Minds Inspiring Futures

Attendance Policy

2026

Approved by	
Name:	Mr J Newport
Position	Headteacher
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Review Date:	

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1.	**Rationale**
	The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school governors, the school staff, parents, carers and the pupil. As a school, we are committed to maximising attendance for all pupils to enable them to benefit fully from their education. We believe that regular attendance is an integral part of effective learning. We intend to celebrate and promote our expectations for maintaining high levels of attendance through establishing effective communication systems with pupils, parents and carers. This policy has been written in line with DfE guidelines.
2.	**Aims and objectives**
	• To celebrate and promote good or improved attendance for all pupils; we aim for all pupils to maintain an attendance figure of at least 95%. • To ensure that all pupils feel supported and valued; we look to work with pupils and parents and carers to identify barriers to good attendance, supporting and challenging families where necessary. • To ensure registers are completed accurately; reasons for absence will be sought and recorded quickly in order to ensure pupils are accounted for and safeguarding procedures are robust. • To familiarise pupils, parents, staff and governors with current attendance figures; we will challenge pupils and parents to improve attendance where necessary, and celebrate improvements with timely and appropriate rewards.
3.	**Registration**
	Morning registration is open from 8.45 AM until 9.15 AM. Where pupils arrive late and the register is still open, they will be marked late by the form tutor. After this time, pupils must report to the office where the register will be updated with the time of arrival and reason for lateness. Any pupil who is late more than 3 times will be issued with a lunchtime duty sanction; parents will be informed by the form tutor if a pupil is persistently late.
4.	**First Day Response**
	Parents should inform the school as soon as possible where a child is/will be absent from school; The office is staffed from 7.45AM, before this the answer phone can receive messages. If no contact is received from the parents of the pupil by 9.30 AM of the first day of absence the attendance officer will contact the parent by app message, followed by another request via telephone or text, requesting a reason for absence. For high risk/vulnerable pupils who are known to children's services, the attendance officer will make direct phone calls to parents and associated professionals on the first day of absence to ascertain a reason for absence. For these high risk pupils, if no responsible adult is contactable and no reason for absence is provided we will undertake a home visit

	Second day of absence without contact will be met with a follow up text to parents informing them that failing to notify school with a valid reason for absence would result in a home visit. Upon the third day of unexplained absences and repeated attempts to contact home, a home visit will be undertaken to ascertain the reason for absence (Appendix A: home visit protocol for further details). Any session where no reason for absence is recorded will be unauthorised at the end of each half term.
5.	**Authorised and unauthorised absences**
	Registers will be coded and recorded in line with DfE guidance, which states clearly those circumstances which are authorised or unauthorised. Where absences are coded as "C" a reason for authorisation will be added as a comment.
6.	**Persistent Absence**
	Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), schools and local authorities are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. Where a pupil's attendance falls below this 90% threshold, school will notify parents in writing and instigate a formal monitoring period of 4 weeks to encourage pupil attendance to improve. The Local Authority has provided a flow chart that details the steps to be taken at each stage when attendance becomes a concern. All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. If the case is referred to the Attendance and Placement Service a Penalty notice for irregular attendance may be issued. The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for irregular attendance the amount will be £160 (or £80 if paid within 21 days) per parent, per child. Within 3 years of the first offence the second time a penalty notice is issued for irregular attendance will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days (no reduction for early payment). The third time an offence is committed for irregular attendance a penalty notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. Please see the Fixed Penalty Notices Overview for parents here. The guidance states that schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country. Where pupils fail to attend school regularly we will seek to build positive relationships with parents and carers to identify and break down barriers to good levels of attendance. These meetings will be held at all levels, including attendance officers, form tutors, heads of year and senior leaders, and our protocol document (See Appendix B: attendance markers for action) details the trigger points for intervention pertaining to pupil absence. Letters and text messages will be sent home.

	As a school we are aware that persistent absence in some cases can be driven by acute anxiety or other external factors. We are trained in and can deliver actions related to Emotional Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) and undertake steps recommended in the Local Authority EBSNA toolkit to support pupils and families through these circumstances.
7.	**Absence requests**
	Pupils who need to leave the school site before 3.15 PM for any appointment must be accompanied by a nominated adult who will sign them out at the school office. ● Key Stage two pupils will not be permitted to leave the school site unless accompanied by a nominated adult. ● Key Stage three pupils will only be permitted to leave the site unaccompanied if the parental request is submitted in writing, or with explicit verbal confirmation from a parent/carer with Parental Responsibility.
8.	**Leave of Absence/Holiday requests**
	There is no entitlement for parents to take their child out of school during term time. You may apply to the school for a leave of absence if you believe there are exceptional circumstances, however please bear in mind that any absence request of 5 days or more that is deemed to not meet the criteria of exceptional circumstances will be unauthorised, and may result in a penalty notice being issued. Decisions as to which holidays meet the criteria will be at the discretion of the Headteacher. If the absence is not authorised and the leave of absence/holiday is taken regardless, the case will be referred to the Attendance and Placement Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £160 (or £80 if paid within 21 days) per parent, per child that is taken out of school for the first offence. Within 3 years of the first offence the second time a penalty notice is issued for unauthorised term time leave will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days (no reduction for early payment). The third time an offence is committed for unauthorised term time leave a penalty notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. The new guidance document for issuing penalty warning notices can be found here.
9.	**Appendix A - Home Visit Protocol**
	The home visit protocol can be instigated following any of the following criteria: ● Persistent unexplained absence (-90%) ● Safeguarding/CP concerns ● Mentoring requirements ● Parental request ● Third day of unexplained absences and repeated attempts to contact home.

	In the case of safeguarding/CP, significant cause for concern should be reported to the Front Door service in the first instance. Staff undertaking a home visit must seek approval from a member of SLT before departure. **At least 2 members of staff will carry out a home visit.** Staff undertaking a home visit must ensure the office staff are aware of: ● the name of the pupil being visited ● the destination address ● the time of departure ● the estimated time of return to school While on the visit, staff should follow the risk assessment guidelines to ensure they are protecting themselves at all times. (see attached document) Upon returning to school, staff must complete a home visit report and update the PCL, including informing the attendance officer of the outcomes for attendance monitoring.
10.	**Appendix B: Attendance markers and trigger points**
11.	**Appendix C: Attendance: Roles and Responsibilities**
	Pupils: ● Attend morning registration promptly at 8.45AM each day, and at 1.15PM for period 4 lessons to start promptly. ● Communicate effectively between school and home **Parents**: ● Communicate effectively with the school concerning their child's attendance. ● Notify school, by phone or via the Gateway App by 9:00 am with the reason for a pupil absence. **Attendance Officer:** ● Responsible for all forms of parental contact pertaining to daily absences ● Understand and apply register codes pertaining to all absent pupils. ● Produce Half Termly attendance reports for Form tutors and Heads of Year; produce termly attendance figures for Headteacher's report to Governors ● **Two weeks before the end of each half term** generate a list for HoY of pupils whose attendance is below 95%, and below 90%, with listed intentions. ● In the last week of term issue letters/PWN to parents where pupils following HoY instruction. ● Conduct phone interviews with parents where PA persists. ● Liaise with local authority Attendance, Welfare and Placement service to consult on issuing fines ● Draw up Flexi-plans and secure parental signatures for these ● Undertake home visits as appropriate **Form Tutors:** ● Reward each pupil with 100% attendance with 1 merit each week.

	● Share monthly attendance reports with pupils and encourage good attendance. ● Contact parents where a pupil's persistent lateness is a continuing concern. ● **Action all points indicated on the <u>trigger point and action</u> document.** **Head of Year:** ● **Respond to 2 week notice email** within 5 working days; liaise with form tutors to achieve this. ● Hold 1:1 informal meetings with pupils whose attendance falls below 90% ● Contact parents where appropriate. ● Issue and award 100% and 98% attendance certificates at celebration assemblies. ● **Action all points indicated on the <u>trigger point and action</u> document.** **Senior Leader overseeing Attendance:** ● Oversee monitoring of attendance and support all parties appropriately. ● Table attendance for discussion at Senior Leadership meetings ● Report to Governors on attendance regularly.
12.	**Policy Review**
	This policy will be reviewed annually.