

045 - PUPIL ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE POLICY

Statement of Expectation

At Milestone School we want to ensure that our pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of all the learning opportunities that we have to offer. We want every pupil to attend school every day that they can. This attendance policy sets out what is expected so that this may be achieved.

Attendance Targets

Encouraging Good Attendance

Milestone encourages good attendance through making pupils feel valued & welcome, building sound relationships with parents and communicating any concerns as they arise. We also acknowledge that some pupils have medical needs which prevent them from achieving 100% attendance, and aim to ensure that these families feel supported in achieving the highest percentage possible in this context.

Absence Messages

Parents are encouraged to notify school by 9.30am on the first day of their child's absence, explaining the reason and, if possible, indicating when the child may return. Such messages may be received by phone, note or via school transport.

First Day Calling

If no message is received the class leader (or designated member of staff) will make a phone call to the parent/carer to find out the reason for the absence and date of expected return, and will record the outcome. All telephone messages will be dated and recorded in writing. Messages received by the Reception office are kept in that office.

Procedures for Lateness

Pupils who arrive late, after the attendance registers have been called but before they are closed, should be marked with an L code. This means present but late for the session, and does not count as an unauthorised absence.

Pupils who arrive after the registers have been closed will be marked with the U code ("Late & arrived after the register closed"), which counts as an unauthorised absence.

At Milestone, registers will remain open until 9.45am. Class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance.

The majority of pupils use home to school transport, and many have relatively long journeys. Traffic problems, medical issues, behaviour concerns or other unforeseeable incidents can delay transport and therefore registers are kept open for half an hour after the start of school to accommodate these eventualities. Lateness as a result of transport and being beyond the control of the pupil or parent will be acknowledged as such.

Late Book

Pupil's arriving after registers have been closed should be recorded in the Late Book. The Late Book is kept by the School Receptionist in the main office, and class staff should phone through details of late arrivals to the office for entry in the book.

In the event of fire, the Late Book will be taken out with a print out of the daily register so that all late pupils can be checked as present by teachers.

Authorised Absence is when a pupil:

- is absent with the prior permission of the school
- is too unwell to attend school or is attending a medical or dental appointment
- is away for a day set aside by their parents' religion for religious observance
- has suffered a family bereavement
- has been excluded
- of Traveller parents is travelling in connection with their work

Unauthorised Absence is when a pupil:

- is absent and no explanation (or an unacceptable explanation) is offered.

Where the register shows an unexplained absence at the end of the week, the school attendance officer or administration staff responsible for entering attendance data on SIMS will check with the relevant class as to whether the N code ('no reason provided yet') is to be designated an unauthorised absence, or a different authorised code. In most cases it is expected that class staff will have identified the appropriate code within a week of the absence.

Dental and Medical Appointments

Parents are expected to notify school in advance of such appointments if at all possible. Where a child requires an operation or other prolonged hospital stay, school will work with the family & health services as required, for example to facilitate a phased return to school where this is advisable.

Term time Absence

Parents must ask the Head teacher's permission in writing (standard form provided) before booking any term-time absence. In line with Government and Local Authority guidance such leave can be granted only in exceptional circumstances, and the Headteacher may determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Special circumstances may include: -

- the need for a family to spend time together during or after a crisis, and
- for service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time, if the holidays will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education

Long Term Absence/Extended Leave

Occasionally a child may be absent because of an overseas visit, e.g. to visit a family member or to participate in a religious festival. In these circumstances, a forwarding address and contact details must be provided by the family. If the school has difficulty obtaining such information, the Education, Performance and Inclusion will be asked to assist.

Responsibilities

Parental responsibility and the law

Parents/carers of children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so, they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or be served with a penalty notice.

- **Parents will:**
 - ensure pupils attend school regularly and on time
 - ensure that school is informed of any changes of address etc., especially emergency numbers
 - let the school know if they are having difficulty with attendance so that any available help or support can be offered
 - let the school know by telephoning before 9.30am on the first day of absence from school, why their child is absent and when they are expected to return
 - seek permission from school prior to any absence that is not medical.
 - avoid taking holidays during term time wherever possible
 - ensure that children who are ill do not attend school
 - provide a forwarding address & contact numbers if overseas with a pupil during term time

- **School will:**
 - provide a welcoming and safe environment where pupils and staff are happy
 - make suitable arrangements in each department for the safe, daily reception of pupils
 - be consistent in attendance procedures
 - keep and mark registers accurately
 - follow up any unexplained absences
 - notify parents/carers at least annually of their child's attendance level
 - notify the Local Authority (LA) of pupils who have poor attendance, leave school to be educated at home,
 - go missing or are excluded
 - notify the LA of absence figures for the school and, where necessary, individual pupils

- **The Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will:**
 - ensure that everyone at school treats attendance as a priority
 - promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers
 - be available to discuss attendance concerns with pupils, parents, staff and governors
 - remind parents at least annually of attendance procedures
 - analyse attendance data, looking in particular at those pupils whose attendance percentage falls below the level set by the Government of 90% for persistent absence, does this make sense?
 - oversee attendance procedures

- **Governors will:**
- with the Headteacher/SLT monitor, evaluate and review the attendance procedures regularly
- set targets for attendance

See also: The Milestone Home School Agreement, on our website www.themilestoneschool.co.uk under "General Information". Each household receives a copy of the Agreement every September. If you would like to receive another paper copy please contact school Reception, 01452 874000.

School Times

School starts at 9.15am. Pupils are expected to be in school or in the classroom by that time (dependent upon home to school transport). Morning registration closes at 9.45am, to allow for late arrivals caused by traffic delays, pupil illness or medical issues on the way.

Lunchtimes are: -

Foundation department: 12.00 – 1.30pm

Middle and Senior department : 12.15 – 1.15pm.

Registers – General procedures

School must keep attendance registers for all pupils on the school roll. At The Milestone, we use an electronic system to record pupil attendance. The class leader will call the register at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon.

Every pupil will be marked as present, absent, unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances or engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site. It must be shown, by use of nationally approved codes, whether an absence is authorised or not.

Approved codes (correct as at September 2015) are: -

- / \ Present at registration
- B Educated off-site (not dual registration)
- C Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
- D Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)
- E Excluded but no alternative provision made
- F Agreed extended family holiday
- G Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)
- H Agreed family holiday
- I Illness
- J Interview
- L Late but arrived before the register closed
- M Medical or dental appointment
- N No reason for the absence provided yet
- O Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)

P	Approved sporting activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late and arrived after the register closed
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience (not work based training)
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils
Y	Partial and forced closure. Transport issues where transport is provided by LA
Z	Pupil not on yet on role
#	School closed to all pupils

Reviewed: September 2020
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