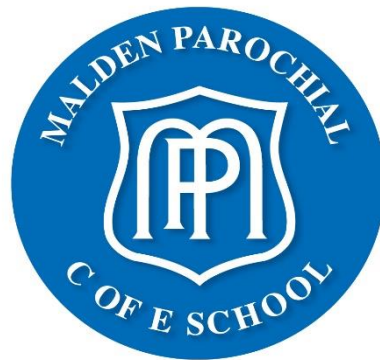


The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames  
Southwark Diocese Board of Education

# **Malden Parochial C of E Primary School**



## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

Policy agreed: Spring Term 2023  
Review date: Spring Term 2023  
or as required



## **Ethos Statement**

This is a Church of England Primary School. As such, its ethos derives from the Christian Gospel. In all that it does or aspires to achieve, the school is informed and strengthened by Christian belief and practice.

At the heart of the school's ethos is the conviction that God loves each person: that God desires the best for each person; that God longs for each person to develop their potential as human beings.

## **Mission Statement**

In accordance with the Ethos Statement, our school will aim to provide high quality education to the children of the local community within a safe, happy and stimulating environment

*Love, Learn, Live!*

**Please note:**

Since 2022 we have worked with the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) to parents/carers if they remove their child from school for five days or more for any reason that has not been authorised by the Headteacher.

**INTRODUCTION**

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and for establishing 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.

**AIMS OF THE POLICY**

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

**OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY**

- Meet the attendance target of 96% which is set by the Governing Body.
- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated and understood by parents/carers.
- Ensure pupils attend school for the maximum number of days possible.

**ATTENDANCE MATTERS**

- The Education Act 1996 (S7), requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives full time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or other agreed means.
- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the School's Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).
- Parents/carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will impact on their child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents/carers, together with school staff, have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.
- There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates so does academic progress, levels of achievement, social development and mental wellbeing.
- The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents/carers, the school with its Governing Body and the Local Authority.
- The Local Authority monitors attendance through Education Welfare Officers, who visit the school each term.

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

**Authorised Absence:** when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or approval given by the Headteacher in advance of the absence.

**Unauthorised Absence:** when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's/carer's request.

This includes but is not limited to the following:

- **Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.**
- **Absences which have never been adequately explained.**
- **Absences for reasons such as shopping, looking after other children, birthdays, holidays etc.**
- **Leave taken during term time which has not been deemed as exceptional and agreed by the Headteacher.**

Repeated absences are referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

- When a parent/carer telephones the school with information about their child's absence due to illness, or other circumstance, this will not be automatically authorised. Each child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised, e.g. a medical certificate may be required.
- Keeping a child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will result in a request for medical evidence from the surgery/hospital. This may be in the form of a date stamped slip confirming the visit, a text message from the surgery/hospital, prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above are to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)

## **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?**

While parents/carers have primary responsibility for ensuring their child/ren attend school regularly, the school can offer support for parents/carers to achieve maximum attendance for their child/ren.

### **School's responsibility:**

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain correct attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absence and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school by 9.15am, initially with a first-day absence telephone call.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To monitor patterns in persistent lateness or absence.
- To work with parents/carers whose children are persistent absentees (attendance below 90%)

- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To report to the EWO and support their work with pupils as necessary. The EWO visits the school to check records every half term.
- To report attendance figures to Achieving for Children, Kingston, on a half termly basis.
- 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.

## **2) Parents' responsibility:**

- To have children in school ready for teaching by the start of the day at 8.50am.
- To inform the school by 9.15am on every day of any absence.
- To make applications for leave, in writing, on the school's 'Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances' form, giving the reason for the request.
- To work with the school and EWO to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.

If parents/carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:

- Talk to their child; it may be a problem that could be resolved with help from home and school.
- Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.
- Talk to the school administrator responsible for attendance.

## **3) The Education Welfare Officer (EWO):**

- The Education Welfare Officer strives to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.
- Section 444 of the Education Act states that "if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence."
- The Education Welfare Service attendance framework promotes early intervention and aims to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle non-attendance as soon as attendance problems become apparent. The service involves engaging the parent where attendance is below the Persistent Absenteeism rate of 90%, specifying what improvements need to be made over a fixed time frame. If no improvement is made then the Education Welfare Officer may invite parents to an Attendance Improvement Meeting to make decisions about the next course of action, which may include

initiating legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order in the Family Court.

- At Malden Parochial CofE Primary School we work with the EWO to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) to any family who takes their child out of school for 5+ days without the Headteacher's agreement to an exceptional circumstance.

#### **4) School governors:**

- It is the Governors' legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their schools. The school's attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

### **THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

The school's Office Administrative staff will log instances of absence and lateness and monitor weekly. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

- Stage 1: Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will send an initial letter to the parents/carers.
- Stage 2: If the concerns persist a meeting between the parent/carer and the Headteacher will be organised.
- Stage 3: If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, Headteacher and the EWO.
- Stage 4: If the concerns persist the school will make a formal referral to the Local Authority Educational Welfare Service to deal with the on-going issues.

#### **Family holidays and extended leave:**

- Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time
- Amendments to the 2006 pupil Registration Regulations, which came into force in September 2013, removed references to family holiday and extended leave. These amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- If parents request absence due to exceptional circumstances, consideration will be given to cultural needs and family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin. All requests for this absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:
  - a. The expected date of return
  - b. That the parents must contact school should any delays occur
  - c. If a student fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the student off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil

Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended in 2013. This means that the child may lose their school place.

- If the permission to take leave is not granted and the student misses school, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service for legal action.
- A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) will be issued through the local authority to any family who takes their child/ren out of school for 5+ days without the Headteacher's agreement to an exceptional circumstance.

## **PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

We promote good attendance throughout our school by:

- Attendance data for each class is updated on the school website homepage monthly and end the end of a term.
- Awarding a cup in Celebration Assembly each week to the class with the highest attendance.
- Awarding certificates to individual children who have 100% attendance each term.
- Including a question about Malden Parochial's effectiveness at promoting good attendance in the annual Parent/Carers Survey.
- Keeping in regular contact with parents/carers where their child's attendance has fallen below 90%.

## **PUNCTUALITY**

Punctuality is an important life skill that children are expected to have, in order to achieve and to succeed. It is also polite and respectful to be punctual.

- Children must be in school by 8.50am each day. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken. The school gates will be shut soon after 8.50am. Children who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office, where they will sign in on the Inventory system.
- Lateness will be monitored by the school and repeated lateness will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and may be referred to the EWO.
- If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed at 9.00am, 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'.
- Where possible doctors' and dentists' appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

- Pupils who are consistently late disrupt their own education and the education of others. Lateness is considered to be equally as serious as absence. If more than six late arrivals within one full month (pro rota) are recorded, the parents/carers will be contacted by letter.
- If lateness persists, the Headteacher will request a meeting with the parents/carer.

### **SICKNESS AND DIARRHOEA**

- Please notify the school by 9.15am on each day of the absence.
- We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.
- Pupils suffering from vomiting and/or diarrhoea should stay at home for 48 hours to prevent spreading sickness.