



The
Maltby Learning Trust

Primary Attendance Policy

Date Last Reviewed: June 2016
Reviewed by: Primary Executive Principal
Approved by: CEO
Next Review Due: June 2018

The Academies within the Maltby Learning Trust encourage 100% attendance and punctuality for all our children and young people. The Trust expects all pupils, including those on Nursery placement to attend regularly and arrive at school on time, in order to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. We expect that parent/carers will ensure that their child arrives at their Academy on time and every day and support the MLT's policies and procedures regarding attendance and punctuality.

In order to achieve excellent attendance we strive to provide a welcoming, safe and secure environment where every child feels valued. In addition, we work hard to create a stimulating and accessible curriculum with high quality teaching for every child, together with a wide range of extra-curricular activities, in a pleasant, clean and stimulating environment. Attendance is inevitably bound up within the ethos of MLT Academies and the networks of relationships that exist within it.

The Maltby Learning Trust Academies will ensure:

- All staff understand their role in ensuring good attendance and punctuality
- Regular attendance monitoring by the Attendance Officers, Learning Mentors, Teachers and Principals
- Children with good attendance and/or punctuality are rewarded
- Children whose attendance falls below the local average are monitored and parents challenged
- Children and their parent/carers are made aware of the importance of good attendance and punctuality and are informed of the consequences when it is not.

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any child's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring young people attend regularly at school is a parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

To encourage excellent attendance, the Trust will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in newsletters, on the website, in our Venture Magazine and in displays around school
- Report to parents/carers regularly on how their child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions and prizes, certificates and commendations
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

PARENTS/CARERS

- Parents/carers have a legal duty to send their children to school regularly and risk prosecution if they fail in this duty.

- Absence will be authorised or unauthorised by MLT. Parents/carers cannot authorise absence (within the context of the law).
- Parents/carers should attempt to arrange appointments for their child outside MLT Academy hours whenever possible. When the appointment is local, the pupil will be expected to attend school before and/or after the appointment.

REGISTERS

- Registers are completed using the MLT's SIMS information system (a paper copy is always available should the SIMS system not be operable). Registers are to be fully completed at each registration session ie. morning and afternoon sessions.
- Registers are legal documents and must be taken clearly and accurately, using the correct symbols/codes.
- Registers must be taken within the first 10 minutes of each lesson.
- No pupil may take a register.

ATTENDANCE OFFICER

- The Attendance Officer will carefully monitor the attendance and punctuality of all pupils. This overview will identify any attendance problems and pupils who are at risk of persistent absence; in addition they will check that teaching staff are completing registers correctly.
- They will discuss attendance problems with Class Teachers and Principals to share information.
- Where attendance is a cause for concern, the non-attendance process will commence.

TEACHING STAFF

- Teaching staff will monitor class attendance and report any cause for concern to the Attendance Officer or the Principal.
- Will have frequent discussions with pupils about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Class teachers will attempt to support pupils who have been absent in making up missed work.

ILLNESS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

- If a pupil becomes unwell during the day he/she will be sent to Reception by the class teacher for appropriate First Aid.
- Pediatric First Aid trained staff will then assess the illness and make decisions about whether parents need to be contacted.
- No children will be allowed to leave school for any reason during school hours unless they are accompanied by a parent/carers, or authorised adult.

ABSENCE PROCEDURE

- Every day a pupil is absent, parents/carers should contact school to report the absence. This should be done by telephone to reception and at the earliest opportunity (by 10am), giving a reason for the absence.

- Where an acceptable reason for absence is given, the absence may be marked in the register as **authorised**. The MLT is under no obligation to accept the reason given for absence if there is doubt of its validity.
- Where appropriate, parents/carers regularly identifying poor health as a reason for their child's absence will be asked to provide **medical confirmation from their GP**.
- If the absence involves physical injury, with implications upon the pupil's return to the school, a risk assessment will be carried out by the Class Teacher and SENCO for each specific case.

UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a legitimate reason such as:

- illness,
- medical/dental appointments (which cannot be made outside of school hours),
- emergencies or other unavoidable causes,
- religious observance

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Unauthorised absences are those which legislation does not consider reasonable. This type of absence can lead to the involvement of the Education Welfare Service. Some examples include:

- Absences which have never been explained
- Shopping
- Looking after other children
- Birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time
- Excessive illness without medical confirmation
- Waiting for a delivery
- Taking or collecting a relative to/from the airport
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Parent's Illness

PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance falls to 90% or below for whatever reason. From September 2015, PA will increase to 90%.

Term Dates	PA=90% Days per term
Term 1 – Sept to Oct	7 Sessions
Term 2 – Nov to Dec	14 Sessions
Term 3 – Jan to Feb	20 Sessions
Term 4 – Feb to April	25 Sessions
Term 5 – May to June	31 Sessions
Term 6 – June to July	38 Sessions

Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Any case which reaches the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority, parents will be informed immediately, and remedial action will be taken.

PUNCTUALITY PROCEDURE

- If your child arrives after registration time they will receive a late mark (L) in the register.
- Registers close at 9am, if a child arrives after this time they must report to reception to be marked present and order lunch. If they are considerably late, they will be given a (U) – 'arrived after registers closed', in the register which counts as a session absence.
- The parent or carer of a child who frequently arrives late at school can be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court under the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure their child attends regularly.

SUPPORTING AND ENCOURAGING GOOD ATTENDANCE

We understand that children are susceptible to illness, but sometimes they can simply be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best addressed between school, parent/carer and pupil. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. Condoning their absence at an early age can lead to habitual patterns of non-attendance. Parents/carers can support students by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly to the school
- Retaining open and honest communication with the child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive).

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- The MLT is no longer able to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

- Any pupil absence during term time, unless granted by the Principal because of exceptional circumstances, will be recorded as **unauthorised absence (G)**.
- All requests for leave of absence should be in writing to the Principal and will be evaluated on an individual basis taking into account individual circumstances. The request for leave of absence form can be obtained from the school office or reception or the school website and must be returned to the Attendance Officer.
- Leave of Absence will **not** be authorised where a previous Leave of Absence has been taken in the same academic year.

FIXED TERM PENALTY NOTICE

Reducing unauthorised absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally. Under existing legislation, parents/carers are committing an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised.

A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority where 'a pupil has been taken on holiday during term time, the absence has not been authorised by the school, and the child's attendance is below the Local Authority average for the previous school year or 3 terms (Primary 95.6%)'

The penalty is £60, per child, per parent, if paid within 21 days of receiving a notice and £120 if paid within 28 days.

Further details are available from the School Office or the Education Welfare Service, Riverside House, Main Street, Rotherham.

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Good attendance is promoted through competitions and prizes, assemblies, public displays, on the website and in newsletters. Good attendance is rewarded with certificates, vouchers, letters home for excellent and improved attendance on an individual and class basis.

ANALYSING AND REPORTING ATTENDANCE DATA

The Attendance Officer reviews attendance on a daily basis, producing daily, weekly, half termly and termly reports. All teachers should look out for any patterns in absence and report their concerns to the child's class teacher. If a pupil's attendance level drops below the school target, the cause will be investigated by the Attendance Officer and the non-attendance process will begin.

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE:

When MLT has exhausted their own non-attendance process and all interventions have failed to achieve the desired outcome, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service, to commence Enforcement proceedings.

PROSECUTION:

Parents/carers are **legally** responsible for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.

If your child does not attend school regularly and punctually, you can be prosecuted and fined up to £2,500. Alternatively, the Council may supervise the family for at least a year or until attendance improves to a satisfactory level, under the terms of an Education Supervision Order.