

Marine Park First School
Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Rationale

It is important for children's continued educational and social development that they attend school regularly and punctually. Regular attendance sets a positive behaviour patterns. Ideally, school should be a place to which pupils wish to come. They should be interested in what is on offer and be able to contribute to the school as a community. It is essential that a school's effectiveness in terms of curriculum delivery be maximised through a high rate of attendance. Punctuality enables teachers and children to make a purposeful start to the school day.

Purposes

"Presence and participation are essential prerequisites of effective schooling". Improving attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the school. Pupils and parents must know of the high priority given by the school to good attendance. Both must also know that pupils will be missed when absent and follow-up will be taken.

Those with a responsibility towards improving attendance are the pupil, their parents and everyone working in school.

Aims

- to promote regular, punctual attendance at school for all children.
- to ensure consistency in recording attendance and following up absence.
- to work closely with parents to ensure regular communication on individual attendance patterns.
- to liaise with the Local Integrated Team (early intervention) and local Authority Education Welfare Service when necessary.

There are procedures in place for recording attendance and punctuality and for acting upon information gathered. These systems are based in the school administration department since the responsibility for absence follow up was removed from teacher's job descriptions.

Guidelines

Registers

Registers provide a daily record of attendance of all pupils; they are documents that may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. They also contribute to the pupils' end of year report. For these reasons registers must be completed with great care.

- Register taken within the first five minutes of morning and afternoon session. (It is not sufficient to do a head count.)
- / \ indicates present (a.m. and p.m.)
- O indicates absent.
- Reasons for absence will normally be coded by the admin officer.
- The register will be taken by two children to the Admin. Officer at 9.10 a.m. or as soon as possible after that.

- Term and dates should be completed as necessary.
- Attendance details are stored electronically via SIMS Attendance Module. The admin. Officer manages this.

Attendance

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence.

- (a) **Authorised absence** (where the school approves the absence)
- (b) **Unauthorised absence** (where the school does not approve the absence)

Authorised	Unauthorised
Illness	Absence without valid reason
Medical/ Dental Appointment but we ask that medical appointments are made outside of school hours unless vital or due to an emergency	Latecomers beyond 30 mins after session starts
Family Bereavement	Persistent lateness within the first 30 minutes of the day
Religious observance	Holidays
Interviews	Special occasions, e.g. birthday, wedding
Excluded children	Shopping during school time.
Sport Competitions (but not travel during the school day for events held outside the school day)/ Music Exams	Minding children, brothers or sisters.
Agreed other educational reasons at the discretion of the Headteacher	

If a child is absent, parents should call the school on the day of the absence stating the reason. Where a reason for absence has not been provided by telephone, then a note should be sent on the day the child returns to school explaining the absence. The school will then decide whether to authorise the absence. If authorisation were to be refused, for instance if the child was kept off for a birthday, then the parents would be informed.

If we have neither a phone call nor note to explain the absence then the administrative assistant will send a text to parents asking for a reason for absence. Further follow up may be necessary if this fails to produce a response.

Where the school has cause to doubt the reasons for absence offered by the parent, the school is not obliged to accept this reason and can deem the absence unauthorised. This is likely to happen only where there is a significant pattern of absence.

The school liaises closely with the Local Authority to pursue more difficult cases of poor attendance and punctuality. The school uses a stepped approach. At the early stages of concern, customised letters are sent initially to make parents aware of their child’s attendance and punctuality. Informal monitoring may be introduced if there is no improvement followed by a more formal monitoring approach linked to a parenting contract or penalty notices. Court action may be necessary as a last resort.

Hierarchy of Action
School Monitors attendance of all pupils
At the early stages of concern, text or customised letters are sent initially to make parents aware of their child’s attendance and punctuality.
Meeting between school and parents
Informal Monitoring Period
Early help, intervention and prevention using the locally agreed Early Help Pathway: Early Help Assessments (EHAs) and contact with the Local Integrated Team
Formal Monitoring with involvement of Education Welfare Service
Legal Proceedings-Penalty notice, supervision order or prosecution

Family Holidays during Term Time

Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a holiday, but the school may choose to grant unauthorised leave of absence. All holiday absences will be recorded as unauthorised.

In considering whether or not to grant unauthorised leave for family holiday the school will consider each case individually, taking into account the child’s overall attendance and reason for taking the holiday. To make a decision whether to grant leave of absence, the Headteacher may consider the previous and current years’ attendance for the pupil and if the school has recently untaken any of the actions identified in the “Hierarchy of Action” outlined in the attendance and punctuality policy (see previous section).

The school discourages parents from taking holidays at any time but it is particularly detrimental at the beginning of the academic year as pupils who are absent at this time may have difficulties adjusting to a new class on their return as new rules for the class will have been set during their absence. Leave of absence forms can be obtained from the school office (and website) and all requests should be submitted to the office at least one week before the first day of the intended absence.

The school will follow the “Hierarchy of Action” for unauthorised holiday absence and reserves the right to report a pupil to the Education Welfare Service as per regulations (currently following 20 days unauthorised absence) and uplift their UPN to the lost pupil website. Ultimately this could result in you losing your child’s place at the school.

Reintegrating Long Term Absentees

Following a long period of absence, a child may feel vulnerable, so staff may wish to arrange a phased or gradual return, consider whether Special Needs support is appropriate, ensure that all staff are aware of the situation and nominate a key person to monitor the child's reintegration into school. All children must feel welcomed back and know from whom they can seek help.

The school seeks to improve general class attendance and to improve attitude of persistent offenders by:-

- a) Informing parents of our expectations and ways of helping combat poor attendance e.g. through newsletters and information sheets
- b) Presenting 100% attendance certificates and credits to pupils.
- c) Other incentives used at the school's discretion
- d) Following up Persistent Absentees with the Headteacher co-ordinating the school response with support/advice from the Local Integrated Team and/or Education Welfare Service.

To support this the school has the following systems:

Daily Admin Attendance/Punctuality Routines

- Identify patterns in lateness and refer these concerns to the Headteacher
- Text parents when pupil is not in school
- If necessary, contact Education Welfare Service (EWS) when contact cannot be made with parents
- After having received phone call/ made contact with parents mark missing pupils with appropriate reason e.g ill or medical appointment
- Mark register for the pupils who are taking granted, unauthorised holiday
- Print attendance information when requested by Head Teacher / EWS and when a parent requests a holiday for their child during term time.

Regular Lead Professional Attendance/Punctuality Routines

- Deal with any concerns reported by teaching, classroom or adult staff.
- Check attendance of all pupils where attendance is less than 96% - check reasons for absence and follow up with EWS
- Check attendance and punctuality of all pupils– check reasons for lateness and follow up with EWS
- Where attendance /lateness does not improve after contact from the school, arrange in school meetings, these may be followed up with involvement of the Local Integrated Team or EWS.
- Monitor impact of monitoring period and recognise where improvements are achieved **or** move to statutory proceedings where child's education continues to be detrimentally affected by attendance / lateness.
- Take appropriate actions after unauthorised holidays taken including, if necessary asking EWS to arrange an attendance panel.

Lateness

- Class teachers should be ready to take the register at 9.00 a.m. and 1.15 p.m.
- Children should be encouraged to be in class, ready to start the session, at these times.

- Children arriving between the end of registration and 9.15 a.m. should be marked late in the register (Admin. Officer will do this if latecomer reports to her). Lateness should be shown by L.
- The signed and dated registers will be kept in a dedicated place and will act as the legal record.

Improving Punctuality

Repeated absence at the beginning of a school session can amount to failure to attend regularly for the purpose of 1993 Education Act. The school seeks to improve general punctuality and to improve attitude of persistent offenders by:-

- a) Informing parents of our expectations and offer ways of helping combat lateness.
- b) Parents of persistent offenders will be contacted, and reported to the EWS, if there is no improvement.
- c) Praise and acknowledge latecomers who improve.
- d) Ensure that staff set a good example by arriving punctually for lessons.
- e) All children and parents must understand that lateness is actively discouraged, although sensitivity may be appropriate in some cases.
- f) Schools may use other incentives to improve levels of punctuality.

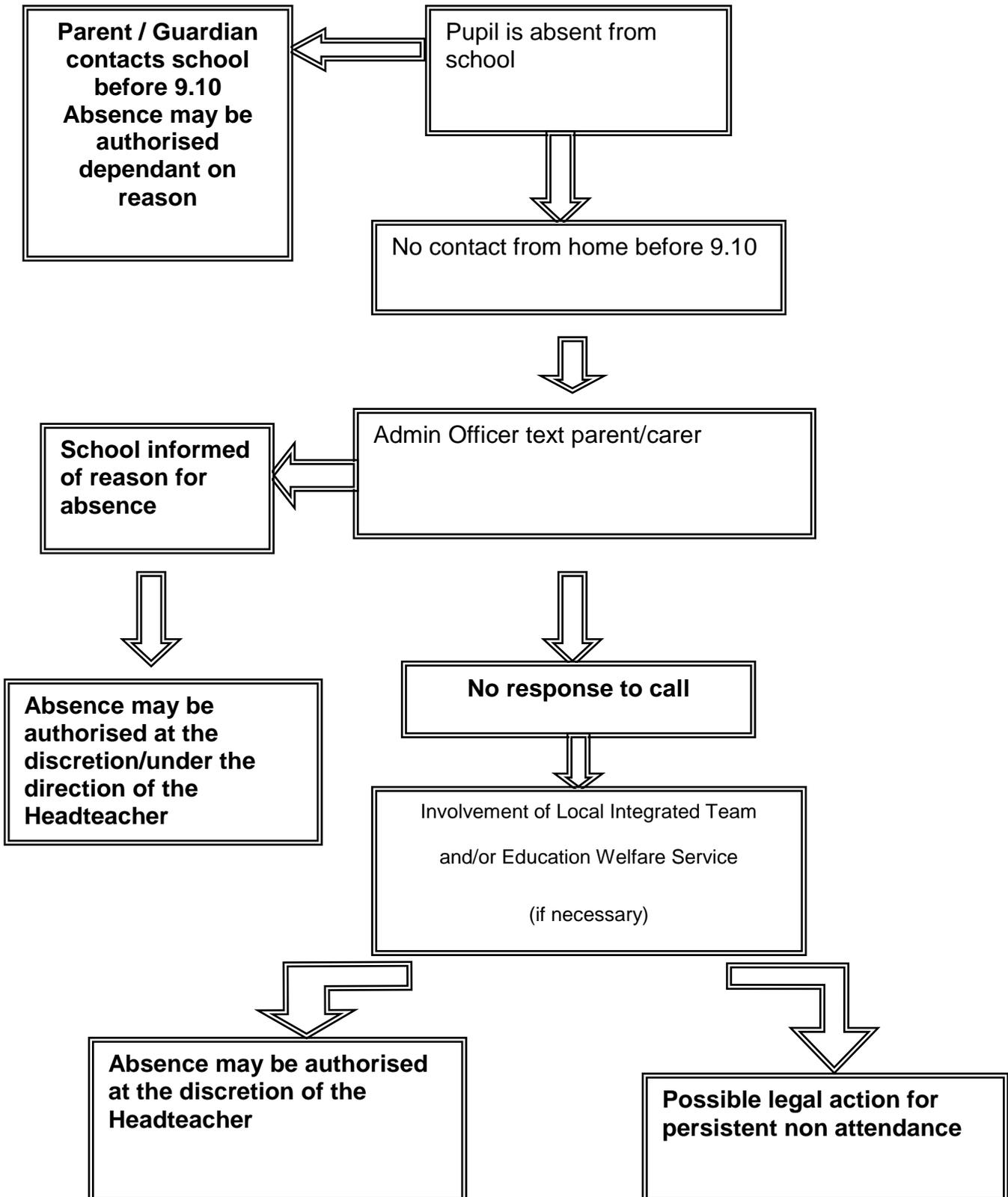
Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of all these issues will be the responsibility of the Headteacher, the class teachers and the EWS who will all work together with families to help improve attendance and punctuality.

Reviewed: Annually
Last presented to curriculum sub autumn 2017

Attendance Flowchart

It is expected that all pupils achieve an attendance figure of 95 % or better. If your child is absent and their attendance is below 95% and you do not contact school you can expect the procedures outlined below to apply. The procedure is the same for all schools in the partnership. Remember poor attendance can lead to legal action being taken.





MARINE PARK FIRST SCHOOL

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Name of Child

Class

Request the Headteacher to grant leave of absence from school

From

To

Total number of day requested

Details of exceptional circumstances causing leave of absence from school during term time.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Signed Date

This form is to be completed by parents and approved by the school before leave is taken. Please note you should not automatically expect school to agree to leave of absence.

Leave of absence in this instance has / has not been agreed.

Signed (Headteacher)

Date



MARINE PARK FIRST SCHOOL

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR FAMILY HOLIDAY

It is expected that family holidays will normally be taken during school holidays. Continuity of learning can be seriously disrupted by absence from school, causing disadvantage to a child's education.

Name of Child Class

We wish to notify the Headteacher that we will be taking our family holiday,

From

To

Total number of days

Details of exceptional circumstances causing holiday to be taken during school time.

.....
.....
.....
.....

Signed Date

This form is to be completed by parents and signed by the school before holiday is taken. Please note:

From September 2011 the Governors have agreed that holiday in term time will no longer be authorised.

- Your child should not miss more than 10 days for a family holiday in any school year.
- Avoid taking leave of absence during May when you child will be taking tests.
- Please remember - you must cancel your place in the Out of School Club or Wrap-Around or you may be charged.

For School Staff Use

Current Attendance %	Previous Year's Attendance % (if applicable)

Tick if this absence is likely to result in attendance that will fall below the persistent absentee threshold of 90% and there is a history of persistent absence requiring further action from the school.

Signed (Headteacher) Date



MARINE PARK FIRST SCHOOL - Equality Impact Assessment

1. Name of the change, strategy, project or policy:	ATTENDANCE POLICY		
2. Name of person(s) completing this form:	S. EASTON		
3. Has the policy/practice been assessed to consider any potential impact on the equality groups?			
Yes – This policy recognises the importance for every child’s continued educational and social development that they attend school regularly and punctually.			
The school will fulfil its obligations to equality by approaching its practices in relation to the management of pupil attendance and requests for leave of absence in a fair and consistent manner, with regard to guidance from North Tyneside Local Authority and the DfE.			
Where potential impact has been identified, please complete questions 5-9. If none is identified, please proceed to question 10.			
4. Equality Target Group (circle):	Negative impact – it could disadvantage	Reason	
Race Religion/belief Disability Gender Gender Reassignment Sexual Orientation Age Pregnancy/Maternity Marriage & Civil Partnerships			
5.		Yes	No
a) Is the impact legal/lawful? Seek advice from your School link HR Advisor if necessary.			
b) Is the impact intended?			
6. Does this action/policy/procedure attempt to meet the aims of the public sector equality duty? (this should feed into your Single equality scheme & action plan)	Yes, No, N/A	If yes, please provide details	
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation			
Advance equality of opportunity between different equality groups			
Foster good relations between different equality groups			
7. If you have identified any negative impact, have you identified any ways of avoiding or minimising it?			
8. Is it possible to consider a different policy/strategy/action, which still achieves your aim, but avoids any negative impact on people?			
9. In light of all the information detailed in this form; what practical actions would you take to reduce or remove any negative impact?			
PART B) To be completed when assessment and consultation has been carried out			
10.a) As a result of the assessment and consultation completed in Part A above, state whether there will need to be any changes made to the policy, project or planned action.			
10.b) As a result of this assessment and consultation, does the school need to commission specific research on this issue or carry out monitoring/data collection?			
No			
11. Have you set up a monitoring/evaluation/review process to check the successful implementation of the policy, project or change?	Yes	x	No
The Governing Body will receive termly information via Headteacher Reports regarding pupil attendance which may inform policy and practice. This policy will be kept under periodic review.			