



# Attendance Policy

## Statement of intent:

Livingstone Primary School is committed to monitoring and promoting attendance to pupils. We understand the impact that low attendance/persistent absence has on a child's educational progress and attitude. It can lead to poor attainment and can have an impact on their social skills, as it can lead to problems with a child forming/maintaining friendship groups and impact on good habits for the workplace.

For our children to get the most from their education, it is essential that they attend school regularly and on time. Regular absence will seriously affect a child's learning, and persistent lateness disrupts lessons and the learning of other children. Ensuring that pupils attend regularly and are punctual is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of staff.

The school aims to work together with parents to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend both regularly and punctually.

The following table gives an idea of what the percentage attendance across the year looks like in school days missed in that year.

- If your child has 98% attendance then they have missed 4 days of school over the year.
- If your child has 95% attendance then they have missed 10 days (2 weeks) of school over the year.
- If your child has 90% attendance then they have missed 19 days (nearly 4 weeks) of school over the year.
- If your child has 85% attendance then they have missed 29 days (nearly 6 weeks) of school over the year.
- If your child has 80% attendance then they have missed 38 days (7 ½ weeks or half a term) of school over the year.
- If your child has 75% attendance then they have missed 48 days (9 ½ weeks) of school over the year.

## Principles

- It is the parents/carers' responsibility to contact the school on the first day of an absence
- Regular and full-time attendance is essential if children and young people are to benefit fully from their school life
- It is important that children learn the importance of being punctual as part of their preparation for adult life
- The school and parents/carers should work together in order to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality

## Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to

- set out the ways by which attendance and punctuality are managed by the school
- clarify the role of the parents/carers

## Parents' responsibilities:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.
- Parents should ensure that, if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as illness, they should contact the school as soon as possible, on the first morning of absence. This may be done by phone, by email / letter, via the School Spider app or in person. Verbal messages on the parent's behalf from an adult relative or representative such as a childminder or friend may be accepted at the school's discretion on the first day of absence – subsequent absences must be explained by the parent. Verbal messages from children, e.g. siblings, will not be accepted. (See Appendix 1 – first day contact guidelines).
- Parents may not authorise their child's absence – only the school can do this, on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents. Should parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason, the school will record such absences as unauthorised. In some cases, this may be retrospective and authorisation may be withdrawn should

circumstances arise leading the school to decide that the reason given was not truthful. If this occurs, this will be discussed with the parent.

- Parents should ensure that their child arrives on time for the start of registration (8.55 am). Children arriving after this should report to the front office. Registers will be taken twice daily (at 8.55am and after lunch). Registers will close at 9.30 and 1.30. Any child arriving after the close of the registration period will be recorded as “absent” for that session. Arrivals before registers close will be recorded as “late” but the child is considered present for the session.
- Parents should avoid booking family holidays during term-time. From September 2013, the Headteacher no longer has the power to authorise term-time holidays. If a leave of absence is required, parents should complete an Application Form for Leave of Absence. Each case will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Pupils will not be granted authorised absence for holidays during term time unless there is an exceptional circumstance. Unless authorised due to an exceptional circumstance, any holidays taken will be unauthorised and parents / carers may be subject to legal sanctions.

### Penalty Notices

Under previous legislation, parents of a registered pupil whose child failed to attend school regularly and whose absence was unauthorised, committed an offence for which prosecution was the only available sanction. With the Education (Penalty notices) Regulations 2007, penalty notices were introduced as an early intervention strategy as an alternative to the previous sanction by allowing parents an opportunity to discharge potential liability for conviction for the offence. From 1 September 2013 the fine is £60 to be paid within 21 days and increased to £120 to be paid within 28 days. If the penalty remains unpaid by the end of 28 days, the Local Authority must consider the commencement of proceedings for the offence to which the notice relates. The prosecution is not for the non-payment of the notice but is for failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

Penalty notices should be used as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing and to supplement rather than replace the use of the wider powers already available. As with current legislative action, they are to be used for the enforcement of attendance and not for use as a punishment for absence.

Tameside Local Authority authorises the issue of all penalty notices. Where if parents fail to follow advice given by the school or where co-operation is absent or insufficient to bring about necessary improvement. Penalty notices should be used where a parent is capable of securing an improvement in their child’s school attendance but is unwilling to do so.

They can only be used for periods of unauthorised absence and the defences in law replicate those already in place for enforcement actions under the provisions of Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. A separate penalty notice will be issued to each parent for every child who is not attending school. For each child, there should be an advisory letter issued to each parent during an academic year. All penalty notices will be issued by first-class post.

### Multiple Holiday Prosecution

Livingstone Primary School and Tameside MBC share the Department of Education’s determination to raise levels of pupil attendance and achievement in order to ensure the best possible start in life for our children. On this basis, if more than 2 unauthorised holidays are taken whilst a child is legally required to be in full time education (5-16y), resulting in a penalty notice, we may decide not to issue you with a penalty notice, which is an alternative to a prosecution. Instead, the matter will be referred to Tameside MBC’s Education Welfare Service for consideration of a prosecution under Section 4441 of the Education Act 1996.

If you have previously been issued with 2 penalty notices for unauthorised holidays, it is clear that penalty notices are not acting as a deterrent and therefore it is unlikely this option will be offered in future.

Conviction of an offence under Section 4441 of the Education Act carries a fine of up to £1000.

### School responsibilities:

- The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child’s educational progress and personal wellbeing.
- Registers will be taken twice daily. The Learning Mentor will inspect registers daily in order to ensure that they are being satisfactorily maintained and to identify any potential attendance problems at an early stage.
- Should a class teacher have any concerns about a child’s attendance and punctuality, the Learning Mentor and Headteacher must be informed.

- Should a child be absent, the class teacher will enter the appropriate code in the register. Should no explanation have been received, the class teacher will inform staff in the office or the Headteacher, who will endeavour to make contact with the parent.
- All absence notes from parents should be dated and initialled by the class teacher and returned to the office with the register, where they will be stored. Only notes regarding absences where there are concerns need be brought to the attention of the Headteacher, who may then choose to speak to the parents.
- The Learning Mentor will regularly collect attendance data and use this during meetings with the Mossley Attendance Officer. These meetings will agree on attendance thresholds and targets and will identify tasks and follow-up actions for both the school and the Attendance Officer. Other agencies, such as Social Care, may also be involved.
- Livingstone Primary School will employ a number of strategies to promote regular attendance, including: publishing clear attendance information in the school's prospectus and website; communicating clearly with pupils and parents about the consequences of absence, persistent lateness, holidays in term time and truancy; reminding parents of their legal obligations and the potential sanctions eg Penalty Notices; appropriate personal encouragement for particular children; termly and annual certificates and rewards.

#### Persistent absentees:

Persistent absentees are defined as children whose attendance is below 90% and where unsatisfactory reasons are given for absence. However, the procedures outlined below may apply to children whose attendance is above 90% but where there are concerns about deteriorating attendance or where patterns are emerging, e.g. regular absences on particular days or persistent lateness. Livingstone will start contacting parents when a child's attendance drops below 95% and this may lead to no further authorised absences without medical evidence to support it such as a Drs appt or prescription. All of the above policy applies to persistent absentees, with the following additions:

- Children's names are recorded in the tracking documentation of the Learning Mentor. All class teachers are aware of which children's attendance is causing concern.
- If no message is received, either the office staff or Headteacher must be informed and must attempt to contact the parent at the earliest opportunity. If no contact is made or the message received is unsatisfactory, the Mossley Schools Attendance Officer, Zoe Taylor, must be contacted (01457 832491).

Absence at this level has considerable impact on a pupils' education and parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the school's Learning Mentor and the Attendance Officer in order to offer support, put together an action plan and involve other services if necessary. School need parent's fullest support and cooperation to tackle this. The child's attendance will continue to be monitored carefully. If a child is classed as Persistently Absent, future absences **will not** be authorised unless medical notes or other forms of proof are provided.

#### Understanding Attendance

**Authorised Absence** is when school is notified about pupil absence through a phone call or note by a parent. The absence has to be considered unavoidable e.g. illness, medical/dental appointments, days of religious observance, exceptional family circumstances such as bereavement.

For religious observance, only 1 days absence per religious celebration will be authorised during term time.

A child who is absent for more than five days will be required to provide a medical note from a GP or consultant before we will authorise the absence.

**Unauthorised Absence** can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings, which include Fixed Penalty Notices, and is defined by the school as:

- Absences which do not relate to ill health or personal mitigating circumstances
- Absences that have never been explained
- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Holidays or day trips in term time which have not been authorised by the school
- Lateness – after 9:30
- Occasions when it has snowed but school is open (late marks will be disregarded in this case)

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. We can also use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse or the Early Help Team.

**Punctuality** is essential for a child to have a good start to the day. Poor punctuality is unacceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the school day, they will miss learning activities and important information or news that they may need during the day. Extreme lateness does not only disrupt the teacher leading the class, but disrupts other pupils' learning. Arriving late can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Lateness after 9:30 (when the registers officially close) will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. If a pupil is persistently late, i.e five unauthorised late marks where pupils have arrived after 9.30am the Learning Mentor may contact parents and arrange a Punctuality panel to meet with her and the Mossley Attendance Officer if necessary. If a child has ten late marks after 9:30 they may be referred to Education Welfare to receive a Fixed Penalty Notice. Once the referral has been made, Education Welfare will monitor the child's punctuality via the electronic system (SIMS).

The register will be amended on the electronic registration system (SIMS) during the day, with the appropriate absence codes. This system is used to provide many different reports and types of data to help school monitor attendance effectively.

The school's Learning Mentor, Mossley Attendance Manager and Headteacher will work together to review the attendance of all pupils regularly. This is when pupils who are a cause for concern will be identified. The Learning Mentor will look at the registers everyday and will note any problems with identified families. Action will be taken on a daily basis, such as telephone calls, letters sent; however, any child whose attendance is a 'cause for concern' will be referred to the Attendance Officer. A letter will be sent to parents of any pupil who has been identified as having low attendance, in order to offer support and address any concerns that may be impacting on the pupil attending school. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored, and if there is no improvement parents will be asked to attend an Attendance meeting to discuss the issue.

Our school has a legal duty to promote attendance and ensure that our pupils are accessing their education. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils to ensure we have the best possible level of attendance.

### Registers

The method of maintaining the class registers is through the SIMs Attendance Module. The codes used are taken from the Absence and Attendance Codes: Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities (2009)

/ Present (AM)	I Illness (not medical/dental appointments)	T Traveller absence
\ Present (PM)	J Interview	U Late (after registers closed)
B Educated off site	L Late (before reg closed)	V Educational visit or trip
C Other authorised circumstances	M Medical / Dental appointments	W Work experience
D Dual Registration (attending other estab)	N No reason yet provided for absence	# School closed to pupils & staff
E Excluded (no alternative provision made)	O Unauthorised absence (not covered by other code)	Y Partial and forced closure
	P Approved sporting activity	X Non-compulsory school age absence
G Family Holiday (not agreed or days in excess of agreement)	R Religious observance	Z Pupil not on roll
	S Study leave	- All should attend / No mark recorded

Registers close at 9.30a.m. Lateness after this time is classed an unauthorised absence unless it is for a medical appointment or a reason is provided which can be authorised by the Headteacher.

### Holidays

The Department for Education (DfE) has important amendments to legislation surrounding holidays in term time. From 1 September 2013, the law gives NO ENTITLEMENT to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. School will not authorise holidays and penalty notices will be issued.

### Medical Appointments

Parents/carers must sign their child(ren) out and back in again when attending appointments during the school day. If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it has been agreed with the Headteacher. We do ask parents to make as many appointments as possible outside of school hours. For any appointment in school hours you will be asked to show confirmation of the appointment to the office before you collect your child.

### The School will:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority
- Identify a designated member of the Senior Leadership Team to take responsibility for all attendance matters, including the setting and regular review of targets for the whole school, year/class groups and individual pupils.
- Provide 190 days education a year
- Provide a written school policy which sets a school target for improving attendance with reference to The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007.
- Implement efficient systems of registration which encourage children and parents/carers to account promptly for any absences.
- Implement correct policy for children who are educated other than at school.
- Have an agreed policy that no holidays in term time will be authorised.
- Any unauthorised absence of 10 sessions or 5 school days or more should be referred to the Education Welfare Service in line with Tameside's Code of Conduct for the use of Fixed Penalty Notices.
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and their presence is value
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality using newsletters and other communications to parents/carers
- Develop attendance incentive schemes (individual and group awards etc.) in accordance with the needs of the school.
- Encourage parents/carers to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education
- Highlight important dates such as SATs in newsletters, letters home etc.
- Explain to pupils how poor attendance can impact on attainment.
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life
- Provide support through the school's own pastoral systems, including appropriate contact with parents/carers.
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored and absences are followed up promptly
- Ensure absences are only authorised where the school are satisfied that the absence was genuine.
- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Traveller Education, Health, Social Services etc)
- Analyse attendance data, looking for emerging patterns of non-attendance.
- Record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress and personal well being
- Provide the LA with accurate attendance data as required.
- Put in place monitoring and referral procedures which ensure that children whose attendance is a cause for concern are identified early.
- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality
- Ensure information is available for Governors and parents/carers
- Ensure good liaison where a change of school occurs
- Have procedures in place to help children settle in after a long absence

### Strategies to Promote and Maintain High Standards of Attendance and Punctuality

- All new parents/carers are introduced to the Policy and information on attendance in the School Welcome Pack.
- The weekly newsletter is used as a vehicle to promote this aspect of school life and serves as a reminder when necessary
- Individual parents/carers are informed where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality
- Maintain and promote a set of class rules which refer to punctuality and readiness for work

- Attendance certificates to reward children for 100% attendance are given at the end of every term and academic year
- A display in the hall promotes the best attending class and there is a podium on which the best class for the half term is displayed. This class get a reward.

We expect the parent/carer to:

- Ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis
- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address
- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of the absence. This may be done by phone, email, letter or in person (*See appendix 1 – First day contact guidelines*)
- Contact the school after the first day of absence to advise the school if the absence is continuing
- In cases of lengthy absence, keep the school well informed so that work can be sent home in certain cases and in order for the school to be prepared for the child's return
- Provide a note indicating attendance at the dentist or doctor before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen. We ask that as many appointments as possible occur outside of the school day.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child
- Avoid taking holidays in term time.
- Attend Attendance and Punctuality meetings where a child's attendance or punctuality is causing concern in order to work with the school to improve matters.

Children Missing in Education

A child going missing from school is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Where a child is repeatedly absent from school, especially for long periods, it could indicate potential safeguarding issues such as travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Schools have a duty to monitor children that go missing, particularly on repeat occasions, and report them to their designated safeguarding lead – following their normal safeguarding procedures.

All schools are required to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers. In order to ensure accurate data is collected to allow effective safeguarding, **all schools** must inform the LA of any pupil who will be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home education (In the case of home education, a written confirmation must be received from the parents before LA is notified and children are removed from roll).
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school.
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the school does not reasonably believe they will be returning at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.

School must inform the LA of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more. Schools must pursue all possible routes to ascertain the whereabouts of a child including a home visit before informing the LA.

Appendix 1 – First Day Contact Guidelines

First day contact is a widely used practice in schools and has been shown to improve attendance rates. The correct procedure at Livingstone is as follows:

1. As soon as the registers are returned to the office, a member of staff checks absentees against messages received.
2. For persistent absentees, see the relevant section above. For other pupils for whom no message has been received, staff will attempt to make contact with the parent at the earliest opportunity.

3. When contact is made, the parent will be asked for the reason for absence. In the event that no proper reason is supplied, the parent will be informed that the absence will not be authorised.
4. In the case of minor ailments, the parent will be encouraged to send the child in with an assurance that school will keep a close eye on him/her. *(NB – if there has been a spate of certain symptoms in the school or community, such minor illnesses may be treated as a valid reason for absence).*
5. Where no contact is made, a message should be left asking the parent to contact the school. Where it is impossible to leave a message, a note should be sent.
6. Reasons for absence are then added to the register.

#### Appendix 2 – requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to maximise their educational opportunities. Interruptions in school attendance disrupt continuity of learning and have a negative impact on attainment.

It is the school's responsibility to provide the best education possible. We can only do this if child/ren attend regularly. There is a direct correlation between achievement and attendance, well before GCSE.

The Government's guidance states that only under **exceptional circumstances** may the Headteacher consider giving permission for a child to be absent from school. Such requests should be made on the appropriate form, available from the school office. **Requests for holidays will not be granted.**

In line with national and local guidance the school would like to outline clearly when permission will **not** be granted:-

- During transition time as a pupil is settling into the school.
- Before or during Year 6 SATs or important revision periods leading up to these.
- If the pupil has attendance **below 95 %**.
- If the pupil already has unauthorised absences.

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Penalty Notices for failure to ensure regular school attendance. **Parents or Carers who take their children on holiday in term time may receive a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per child, which must be paid within 21 days.** If payment is made within 28 days, the fine increases to £120 per parent per child. Where a fine remains unpaid after 42 days, the matter will be referred to the Borough Solicitor, who will consider instigating criminal proceedings.

**Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued after 10 unauthorised absences in a 12-week period – this is 10 registration periods, i.e. 5 days. Children who are late without good reason after registration closes (9.30) also receive an unauthorised absence mark.**



Mossley & Carrbrook Schools' Partnership  
Mossley Hollins High School  
Buckton Vale Primary School  
Livingstone Primary School  
Micklehurst All Saints CE Primary School  
Milton St John's CE Primary School  
St George's C.E Primary School

## REMINDER

Dear Parent /Carer

Please find below important information from the Local Authority that we are required to share with all parents concerning absence from School.

It is for information only and outlines the actions that could be taken against parents/carers regarding attendance.

Penalty Notices for Non- school attendance:

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. This means that when a pupil has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more, in any 12 week period (where no acceptable reason has been given for the absence) or if their child persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration, their parents or carers may receive a Penalty Notice fine. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences. Each fine is £60 if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Failure to make the payment will result in the Local Authority taking legal action for failure to ensure regular attendance at school under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996.

In law, an offence occurs if a parent or carer fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Livingstone Primary School, in conjunction with Tameside Education Welfare Service and Greater Manchester Police, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

Parents may also receive a Penalty Notice without a warning letter for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance for the following reasons:

- If they go on holiday in term time.
- If they have not co-operated with the Head Teacher and Attendance Manager and/or Education Welfare following a referral from school after they have taken steps to address the absences with the parent/carers and pupil.

- If their child fails to return to school following a fixed term exclusion.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 also makes it an offence if a parent fails to ensure that their child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion. Penalty Notices may be issued in relation to this matter.

The Local Authority and schools are committed to providing the best possible future for your child. If you have concerns about your child's attendance at school or if you are experiencing any difficulties, contact the school and ask for help.

Yours sincerely

Miss R Willard  
Head Teacher