

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Executive Summary:

- This updated policy follows new guidance from The Key and County.
- There is more detail regarding actions to support families regarding attendance issues.

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Contents

1. Aims.....	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. School procedures	4
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence	6
5. Strategies for promoting attendance	9
6. Attendance monitoring	10
7. Roles and responsibilities	10
8. Monitoring arrangements	13
9. Links with other policies	13
Appendix 1: attendance codes	13

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

Promoting good attendance (a minimum of 96-100%) and reducing absence, including persistent absence

Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support families to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Principles of this policy

The school believes that every child has the right to an education and as such, a high level of regular (every day) attendance will be reflected by their successes and help children develop their full potential.

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement and lower progress.

Recent guidance from the DfE states that students with no absence are 2.2 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs grade 9-5 or equivalent and 2.8 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs grade 9-5 or equivalent including English and mathematics than students missing 15-20% lessons.

Students with a high attendance rate (96% or higher) will achieve more in schools.

Similarly, research clearly demonstrates a strong correlation between high absenteeism in schools and poor student attainment when studying A Level subjects or equivalent.

Objectives of this policy

1. To provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance and punctuality.
2. To recognise the external factors which influence student attendance and work with families and the school to address these to improve the student's attendance.
3. To encourage students and families to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by attending school regularly.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)

- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register.

The attendance register (this is taken using the school's Student Information and Management Systems; SIMS) will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It is also taken every lesson by staff. It will mark whether every student is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

The original entry

The amended entry

The reason for the amendment

The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made:

Students must arrive in school by 8.35am promptly on each school day (for morning registration). This time is signaled to students by a bell and the Front Gate entrance to school will be closed at this time.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken during lesson 4 and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

Daily attendance is monitored by the Student Services Manager and Sixth Form Management. Families are asked to telephone the school before 8.40am on the day of absence to explain any absence. There is a dedicated extension number to report absences (see section 3.2).

Families are contacted where students have failed to arrive by 9.30am and notice of their absence has not been received. This is carried out using an automated system.

When the family fails to report an absence two days in a row, and staff are unable to make contact on the phone, a home visit is carried out, where possible.

Unauthorised absences are followed up by either a phone call or a letter home.

Persistent absence is reported to the Headteacher of Year/Student Services Manager/Sixth Form Management for further action.

All students' attendance is monitored regularly. Where students' overall attendance falls below 96%, or patterns of low attendance are noted, the school will send a letter home outlining our concerns and invite families to discuss the way forward.

Students will be spoken to about their attendance by Student Services Manager, Form Tutor, Head of Year, the Safeguarding Team or SLT.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Families must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if the child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.40am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

If a child is ill, families are expected to notify the school on first day using the 24 hour answer machine service (01494 867843) or email attendance@themisbourne.co.uk including an estimation of the likely length of absence (01494 867843).

Families are then asked to send a written note with their child on the first day of return. This is needed for our records and also authenticates the telephone message.

Absence due to **illness** will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt or is prolonged, the school may ask families to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and families will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage families to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the families should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Families can notify the school in advance of a medical or dental appointment by either contacting the school on the main absence line and / or emailing the school.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences, such as exceptional circumstances can be found in section 4, e.g. serious family illness or bereavement (this is not an exhaustive list)..

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. This will result in a sanction where the school deems this to be invalid.

A student who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

On-going punctuality issues will be discussed with families to ensure that families take responsibility for ensuring the student arrives on time to school.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

See section 3.2 for further details.

3.6 Reporting to families

All families will receive an attendance report linked to the student's assessment reports which are issued at regular intervals during the year. This will link to SIMs and the School Comms Parents App. If the student's attendance and punctuality is deemed to be lower than the standard set by the school, staff will contact the family to discuss strategies to help improve attendance. The school may also seek external agency advice.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as when there is cause for absence due to reasons such as a serious family illness or bereavement. This is not an exhaustive list.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

Religious observance where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's family belongs. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the families' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes: this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showpeople (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

Exclusions (No alternative provision made)

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The school will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Other term time absence requests: Families who need to take their child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the Headteacher as far in advance as is possible. The advance notice time should be deemed to be appropriate by the school. See section 3.3.

Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing outlining the conditions of leave granted.

Failure to return to school: If a student fails to return and contact with the student has not been made or received, school may take the student off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 (please see this guidance for the specific number of days currently 20 days continuous unauthorised absence). This means that the child will lose their school place.

Permission to leave not granted: If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may request the local authority (or the school itself) issue (s) a Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the magistrates' court.

Traveller Absence: It is expected that Traveller children, in common with all other children, are to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller families from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller family is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

When in or around Buckinghamshire, if a family can reasonably travel back to the (base) school then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. The Misbourne will be regarded as the school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the student must have attended regularly in the last 18 months.

Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the student's school place will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance. The Misbourne can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that families must:

advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen (this advance notice must be deemed appropriate by the school); and

inform the school regarding proposed return dates

The Misbourne will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return. Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school

- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered students at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any student and appropriate statutory action may be undertaken.

Unauthorised absence: Absence will not be authorised unless families have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the Headteacher.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A student's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniform
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes
- "Couldn't get up" or family unable to get child to school
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Family holidays

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, students can be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Transfer between schools (once the child is on roll in new school)
Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after the school has tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months.
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and the school has tried to locate the student.
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after the school has tried to locate the student (the school will follow the Child Missing from Education guidelines as set by the DfE).
- Death of a student.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine families for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, families must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Academy.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school recognises that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Families should make school aware (as soon as is possible) of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse and other safeguarding issues.

This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required. The Misbourne also recognises that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, and looked after children. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance and work with external agencies as and when required.

Strategies used will include (and in no particular order):

- Discussion with families and students
- Attendance panels
- Family contracts
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Student Engagement activities
- Friendship groups
- PSHE lesson topics
- Family learning
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both the family and the student(s).

Where families fail or refuse to engage fully with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the school will consider the use of legal sanctions.

6. Attendance monitoring

The Student Services Manager monitors student absence on a daily basis.

Families are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Families are expected to call the school each day the child is absent.

If a student's absence goes above 3 days we will contact the families to discuss the reasons for this. The student's additional needs will be taken into account but the school reserves its right and responsibilities to ensure that every child has the right to an education.

If after contacting families a student's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving Buckinghamshire County Council and other external agencies.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee (and attending school 90% of the time or less).

Student-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with trustees.

The school collects and stores attendance data using SIMS which will be used for internal purposes for example, to track the attendance of individual students, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Misbourne believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, trustees, families, students and the wider school community. As such, the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their families
- Regularly review the school's Attendance Policy (every 3 years) and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and, where appropriate, link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings

- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

7.2 The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trustees.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their families
- Form positive relationships with students and families
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance. For example, good teaching and learning experiences that encourage students to attend and achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and are able to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Department for Education as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Ensure that all the above priorities are shared with and reinforced by all relevant school staff
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families

- Document interventions use the standard required should legal proceedings be instigated

Request that families will:

- Talk to their child about school and education.
- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties as soon as possible for early intervention
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to become involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, where this is unavoidable, and only in exceptional circumstances send a written leave request to the Headteacher in good time

7.3 The Student Services Manager (monitoring attendance)

The Student Services Manager:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the SLT lead.
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with families to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the SLT Lead (and Headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Form Tutors and Class Teachers

Form Tutors and Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes on SIMs and submitting this information to the appropriate members of staff.

7.5 Office and Reception staff

Office and Reception staff are expected to take calls from families about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Assistant Headteacher Pastoral. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection (safeguarding) policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student 's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

