

**MARLBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY
SEPTEMBER 2018**



**MARLBOROUGH
PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Date of Policy Review:	Reviewer:	Date Ratified by Governors:	Date Shared with Staff:	Date of Next Review:
SEPTEMBER 2018	CLAIRE ROBINSON-JONES	September 2018	September 2018	September 2019

Article 28: Children have a right to a good quality education

Article 29: Children have the right to an education which develops their interests, talents and abilities

Rights Respecting Schools

As a Rights-Respecting School, we use children’s rights to underpin everything we do and learn. Marlborough Primary School has been working closely with [UNICEF](#), and is a 'Rights Respecting' School. The term is bestowed on those schools who, in the eyes of UNICEF, put the '[UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)', (UNCRC) at the heart of their planning, policies, practice and ethos.

UNCRC is a list of rights that all children, everywhere in the world, have. The rights are all the things that children and young people need to make sure they are healthy, happy and safe. A rights-respecting school not only teaches about children's rights, but also models rights and respect in all its relationships: between adults and children, between children themselves, and between adults themselves.

Data Protection Statement

The procedures and practice created by this policy have been reviewed in the light of our Data Protection Policy. All data will be handled in accordance with the school’s Data Protection Policy.

Data Audit for this Policy					
What?	Probable Content	Why?	Who?	Where?	When?
LA Referral Form	Pupil and parent data	To support the LA with the necessary information to carry out a thorough investigation	Welfare Officer	Initially Completed on referral form online School copy stored on the server	Held on File until the investigation is complete

As such, our assessment is that this policy:

Has Few / No Data Compliance Requirements	Has A Moderate Level of Data Compliance Requirements	Has a High Level of Data Compliance Requirements
	✓	

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SEPTEMBER 2018	C. ROBINSON-JONES			

Article 28: Children have a right to a good quality education. They should be encouraged to do so to the highest level they can

Article 29: Children have the right to an education which develops their interests, talents and abilities

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Information for Parents

As a school we aim to:

Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 96%

Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance

Maintain good time keeping

Good attendance and punctuality is important because:

Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement. Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically, find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with, find learning more satisfying and settle into High school more easily. A regular attender attends at least 96% of the time

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ensuring your child attends school regularly and on time. Absence should only happen when your child is significantly ill, there should be a symptom, feeling unwell is not enough. Remember we will ask for medical verification where illness-absence is frequent or prolonged
- Telephoning on the morning of any absence to give us the reason and tell us when the child is likely to return to school
- Arranging all non-emergency medical appointments out of school hours or during school holidays
- Sending us a note confirming the reason for your child's absence when s/he returns to school
- Keeping the school updated by telephone/email or letter if your child has an extended period of absence
- Tell us if there is a change in your circumstances, if you are leaving the area or changing schools. Making sure we always have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers and emergency or other contact details.

We shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls and letters as necessary
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in our letters, the school brochure, on line, open evenings, the Home-School Agreement and pupil annual reports
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality
- Publish your child's attendance rate on her/his annual school report
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance and punctuality.
- Children with 90% attendance or less, whatever the reason for the absence, are classified as persistent absentees. If we have concerns we will discuss this with you and may also make a referral to the Local Authority School Attendance Officer who visits the school regularly to review and support attendance and punctuality issues.
- Publish our attendance rate in the school profile and the Governing Body's Annual Report to parents.

Please remember that absence and lateness, for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his/her learning. A good understanding of the work and good progress can only take place when the child is in the classroom regularly and on time.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a child is ill, religious observance.

We realise that there are rare, unavoidable occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

Unauthorised Absence

Where there is no explanation for an absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory the school will not be able to authorise the absences. These are known as “unauthorised absences”

A child’s unauthorised absences are an offence for the parent. Examples of unauthorised absence are: Going for a family day out; sleeping in after a late night; Going shopping; because it is your child’s birthday, frequent claims of illness as a reason for absence or a Parent’s illness

Leave of absence in term time

Amendments to the 2006 attendance regulations make it clear that Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time for Holidays. An application can be made if there are exceptional (*and documented*) circumstances. Parents sometimes confuse telling the school as being good enough, this is not so, you will need explicit, written permission from the school for any leave

- If a child is not present at the beginning of a school term, we cannot guarantee that a place will remain available on their return to school. You should make definite arrangements so that you return in good time. If you experience delays in returning from a trip within the UK or abroad for whatever reason, (although parent usually claim illness) the school will require documentary evidence in English or translated accompanied with proof of original return dates, i.e. tickets or travel documentation.
- If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and you may be liable for a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action and in certain instances the child may also lose their school place.

Unauthorised Absences are reported to the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service may contact you where unauthorised absence continues to be a problem. Unauthorised absence could result in a Fixed Penalty Fine or other legal action.

Religious Observation Absence

Marlborough Primary School consults the annual Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education, (SACRE) guidance on how to manage good rates of attendance whilst determining whether to grant pupils an authorised absence for religious observation.

SACRE (2016) states:

Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. Headteachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for the headteacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school.

At Marlborough Primary School pupils may take no more than 2 days of authorised absence in one academic year. This will adhere to the following:

- Authorised absence will only be granted for a date 'exclusively set apart by the religious body'
- If a date has not been 'exclusively set apart' on the SACRE list or by the relevant religious body, the Headteacher will enquire whether religious observance can be accommodated outside of school hours prior to making a decision as to authorise the absence or not
- Absence taken on a school day for a festival falling at a weekend, or in a school holiday, will not be authorized
- Additional days taken on either side of the day explicitly set aside for observance will not be authorized
- The understanding of up to 2 days should not be viewed as an entitlement to be taken in full. For example, if only 1 festival day falls on a week day in term time then the school will only authorise that 1 day's absence. The school will not authorise an additional day of absence to be taken at another time

As part of our written communications with families, we will send a religious observation absence letter as major religious festivals approach e.g. Eid, Diwali etc, asking for advance information of requests for absence for religious observance. Parents are asked to give the school as much notice of a proposed absence as is reasonably possible and be willing to discuss with the school how pupils will catch up with work missed.

Punctuality

- It is important to be on time as the first part of the school day is used to give out instructions, set or group children or organise schoolwork for the rest of that day. It is also a time for children to settle down by reading or another quiet activity so they are ready for lessons immediately after registration.
- Morning registration is at 8.50am. This is the time your child must be in the line in the playground. You need to ensure your child is coming through the school gate by latest 8.45am. The morning play session gives children and parents an opportunity to socialise and for the children to gain a deeper sense of community and belonging.
- Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. **We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.**
- Arrival (particularly if the lateness is frequent/persistent) after the close of registration at **9am** will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with the DfE guidance; this is effectively an absence.
- All lateness is recorded daily. The number of minutes late and the reason for lateness if known will also be recorded. This information can be made available to the courts in the form of a report should a prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness.
- If a child is persistently late the Deputy Headteacher and Attendance officer will contact parents and arrange a meeting to discuss concerns and support available.

Some children/classes will be re-grouped for targeted learning/catch up. The curriculum is designed to be progressive, new topics are often introduced at the start of the week and the majority of teaching takes place during the morning. (Each day's learning builds on the day before.)

Collection from School (This section should be read alongside Marlborough Primary School's policy and procedures for looking after children not collected on time after school)

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day or from any after school activity. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place

of safety and to share concerns with other agencies including the Harrow Children's Integrated Response Service (formally Social Services).

The school day ends at 3.25pm and children are expected to be collected promptly. The school will place any child who is not collected by 3.40pm into the After School Club and a charge of £10 will be made to the parent/Carer.

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than to go to High School) parents are asked to:

Give the school comprehensive information about their new address, plans including any date of a move and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school using the 'Leavers form' which is available from the school office.

When pupils leave and we do not have information, about where they have gone, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing Education'. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Harrow Children's Integrated Response Service (formerly Social Services), the Police and other agencies, to try and locate your child. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the DfE and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if these absences continue.

We value your support in helping us to maintain the high standards to which we always aspire.

SAFEGUARDING SECTION OF ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is a statutory requirement that all children over the age of 5 attend school. The school has a responsibility to ensure that any child is safe when not in school during term time.

- All families wishing to travel abroad and request leave of absence from school will need to meet the Headteacher and / or Admissions Officer.
- During the meeting the Headteacher / Admissions Officer will explain the legal responsibility for parents to ensure all children over 5 are in school. The Headteacher / Admissions Officer will then explain that their priority is for the safeguarding of the child in question and that this will obviously also be of concern to them as parents.
- During this meeting, the parents/carers will be asked if the child will be staying with anyone other than themselves and the school will ascertain whether there are any safeguarding concerns for the child whilst away from school.
- If the pupil is female and from a Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) practicing or affected community then the Headteacher will use direct questioning to ascertain whether “cutting” of the girl will be undertaken during this holiday. The Headteacher will then take the information from this meeting and make a decision on whether to refer to the local LSCB or Police.