

# Pathway Primary Federation

*Whittington CE (VA) and Morda CE (VC) Primary Schools*

'Love of God and others as oneself.'

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## **Section 1 – Introduction**

At Pathway Primary Federation we believe that regular attendance and punctuality are essential if children are to make good progress and maximise their full potential.

‘The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment’ (DFE 2024).

Staff and governors are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure that the policy is effectively and appropriately implemented.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is that pupils have positive attitudes towards their education and that school is a supportive environment where all pupils want to be, are keen and ready to learn. It is true however that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance we aim to work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance through the development of strong and trusting relationships.

This policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all. It is the right of every child to receive an education. To do this, everybody needs to understand their role and responsibilities in ensuring a child’s good attendance. This policy outlines how we aim to achieve that in our schools.

## **Section 2 – Roles and responsibilities**

### **(a) The Governing Body**

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school’s policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Executive headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **(b) The Executive Headteacher**

- Promoting the importance of school attendance
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Reviewing leave of absence request forms and authorising these requests where there is an ‘exceptional circumstance’.

### **(c) The designated senior leader\* responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governors, the Executive Headteacher and the Senior Leadership team
- Attending half termly attendance reviews with the Education Welfare Officer and school Administrator
- Attending/ accessing training as necessary to support the improvement of attendance in school
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

(\* Designated senior leader is currently the Head of School)

#### **(d) The Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)**

The Educational Welfare Officer is responsible for:

- Overseeing the school attendance figures.
- Monitoring attendance that falls below 93% in collaboration with designated senior leader and administrator
- Discussing concerns about attendance with the designated senior leader and administrator responsible for attendance.
- Following discussion, providing half termly attendance reports to designated senior leader and administrator
- Work with school staff to tackle persistent non-attendance by issuing supportive attendance concerns letters (EWO 2), holding meetings and carrying out home visits
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

#### **(e) Teachers**

Teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the administrator.
- Encouraging students to achieve excellent attendance
- Notice any attendance patterns causing concerns and discuss with the relevant member of staff and/or parents.

### **(f) School administrator**

The school administrator is responsible for :

- Taking calls from parents about absence and recording it on the school system
- Phoning parents when a child is absent without explanation
- Monitoring specific children with less than 93% attendance and discussing barriers to attendance that may exist with the designated senior leader and EWO.
- Sending out EWO 1 letters that offer support where attendance starts to become a concern, on behalf of the EWO.
- Attending/ accessing training as necessary to support the improvement of attendance in school.

### **(g) Parents**

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure that their child attends school everyday on time.
- Contact school to report their child's absence by 8:30 a.m. on the day of absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide school with more than one up to date emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure, where possible, that appointments are made outside of the school day.

### **(h) Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

### **Section 3 – Authorised and unauthorised attendance**

#### **Unplanned absence e.g. illness**

The pupil's parent must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the individual school office, sending a Dojo message or by email to [admin@whittington.shropshire.sch.uk](mailto:admin@whittington.shropshire.sch.uk) or [admin@morda.shropshire.sch.uk](mailto:admin@morda.shropshire.sch.uk) . Parents must notify school on each subsequent day of illness or, where applicable, provide a return to school date.

#### **Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, without reason, the school will:**

- Message and/or telephone the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the Educational Welfare Officer.

#### **Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment and, where possible, provides an appointment letter or communication. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and attend before and/or after the appointment. The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Please see the next section for further details about leave of absences requests.

#### **Term-time leave of absence**

Government law with regard to granting term time leave of absence is that any holidays taken during term time will **not** be authorised by the school.

This means that schools may **not** grant **any** leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances.

Exceptional Circumstances may include:

- Proof of enforced holiday period
- Leave request for a significant family event (i.e. once in a lifetime, unlikely to be repeated)
- Necessary for reasons of Special Educational Need.

Exceptional Circumstances does not include:

- Cheaper holiday costs

- Visiting relatives (this should be planned into holiday periods)

In law, parents are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at school. Whilst sympathetic to families wanting to spend time together, and recognising the value of such experiences, Pathway Primary Federation must adhere to the terms set by the government.

## **Section 4 - Recording attendance**

### **(a) Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

\*See notes at the end of the policy for a full list of attendance codes used.

We monitor every child's attendance in school and use the following guide when checking attendance:

|  |
|--|
| <p><b>100 % to 98 % Excellent attendance</b></p> <p><b>Your child is absent for less than 4 days in the school year</b></p>  |
| <p><b>97 % to 95 % Good attendance</b></p> <p><b>Your child could still be missing up to 7 days learning in the school year</b></p>  |
| <p><b>94 - 93% Just below attendance target</b></p> <p><b>Your child could be missing up to 2 weeks learning in the school year which can make it harder to keep up in class.</b></p>  |
| <p><b>92 - 90% Cause for concern</b></p> <p><b>Your child could be missing up to 4 weeks learning in the school year. At this stage your child's attendance will be monitored by the Educational Welfare Officer ( EWO) in collaboration with school staff. Staff may contact parents for a supportive discussion about attendance.</b></p>  |
| <p><b>Below 90% Serious concern</b></p> <p><b>Your child has been identified as a 'Persistently Absent Pupil' and their learning may be seriously affected by this. Less than 90% attendance is over 4 whole weeks of lessons missed. Supportive letters may be sent home and you may be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and asked to come into to school for an attendance fast track meeting. Meetings are supportive and aim to put in place measures that will lead to an improvement however if that is not forthcoming a Penalty Notice Warning or fine could be issued by the EWO.</b></p> |

Each half term a formal meeting is held between the Education Welfare Officer, the Head of School and the school administrator to look at attendance in more detail. At these meetings each child with attendance below 93% is discussed and factors such as whether the attendance is rising or falling are noted. We fully understand that attendance percentages can fall due to a significant period of absence due to unavoidable circumstances, such as illness. Following on from this your child's attendance should begin to rise and this is taken into account during the discussions. Where attendance becomes a concern a variety of measures as outlined in the table above may be considered. Each case is looked at individually and all circumstances are considered carefully.

| Key to Codes |   |
|--------------|---|
| /            | Present (AM)                                      |
| \            | Present (PM)                                      |
| B            | Educated off site (not Dual reg.)                 |
| C            | Other authorised circumstances                    |
| D            | Dual registration                                 |
| E            | Excluded  |
| G            | Family holiday (not agreed)                       |
| H            | Family holiday (agreed)                           |
| I            | Illness   |
| J            | Interview   |
| L            | Late (before registers closed)                    |
| M            | Medical/Dental appointments                       |
| N            | No reason yet provided for absence                |
| O            | Unauthorised Abs                                  |
| P            | Approved sporting activity                        |
| R            | Religious observance                              |
| S            | Study leave                                       |
| T            | Traveller absence                                 |
| U            | Late (after registers closed)                     |
| V            | Educational visit or trip                         |
| W            | Work experience                                   |
| #            | Planned whole or partial school closure           |
| Y            | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances |
| X            | Non-compulsory school age absence                 |
| Z            | Pupil not on roll                                 |
| -            | All should attend / No mark recorded              |

### **The law on school attendance**

- The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education
- The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.
- Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

### **Legal sanctions for unauthorised attendance**

Where all other options have been explored and attendance is still a major concern legal sanctions can potentially be enacted. The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. The Education Welfare Service may take the following legal proceedings against you for failure to comply with the Law:

- A Penalty Notice payable of a £80 or £160 fine.
- Prosecution under s444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under s444(1)(a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

# PENALTY NOTICE FINES FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IS CHANGING

## FIRST OFFENCE

1

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular Attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days  
Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

2

## SECOND OFFENCE (WITHIN 3 YEARS)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular Attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child to be paid within 28 days. No reduced rate will be offered.

The following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after **19th August 2024**.

3

## THIRD OFFENCE AND ANY FURTHER OFFENCES (WITHIN 3 YEARS)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on a Parents future DBS certificate, due to failure to safeguard a child's education'.

## 10 SESSIONS (5 DAYS) OF UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE IN A 10-WEEK PERIOD

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period.

Please follow the link for the Publication that will start from 19th August 2024.  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)