



Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2020-2021

Policy Reviewed:	September 2020
Next Review:	<i>September 2021</i>

Mission Statement

At Masefield we believe that all our children can achieve, becoming successful future citizens that contribute positively to a society in which all members are equally valued.

High aspirations, high motivation and high outcomes for all, ensure that achievement gaps wherever they exist are narrowed in order to improve pupils' life choices and future prospects.

We strive for all of our children to be safe, feel valued, develop resilience and continually learn within our nurturing and supportive community.

At Masefield, our children BELIEVE, ACHIEVE and SUCCEED!

At Masefield, we believe that high attendance is fundamental to academic and social success of all pupils. Regular school attendance is important so that pupils can:

- Work co-operatively with others
- Develop their academic knowledge and skills and build on these each day
- Gain skills and knowledge and the confidence to apply them to new situations in order that they can take full advantage of the life chances available to them
- Improve their understanding of the world around them
- Widen their experiences beyond their immediate area
- Become confident and successful adults who make a positive contribution to society

Systematic procedures are in place in order to:

- Maximise attendance rates by encouraging, recognising and rewarding good attendance and to ensure that attendance at school is viewed positively.
- Investigate individual absences and ensure that pupils and parents are clear that unauthorised absences are not acceptable.
- Work closely with pupils and parents, to help them overcome problems, which may prevent pupils from attending regularly.
- Provide parents with support and advice in order to maintain and improve attendance.
- Recognise and celebrate improvements in attendance and punctuality of individuals and families.

The policy and procedures are underpinned by the following guidelines and principles:

- Children should attend school punctually every day
- Pupils should only be absent if the reason is "unavoidable"
- Authorised absences are when a pupil is away from school for a good reason – illness or unavoidable causes
- Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider acceptable and for which no "leave" has been given. Every half-day session of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised
- Reasons for absence are always required
- Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason is avoidable. This includes keeping children off school for trivial reasons; shopping, hairdresser's appointments, minding younger children, birthdays or for a treat.

- The school retains the right to classify absence as authorised or unauthorised
- The authorisation of any absence is at the Head of School's discretion. If the legitimacy of the absence due to illness is in doubt, the school reserves the right not to authorise the absence and to consult with outside agencies concerning seeking medical advice.
- Poor attendance will not be tolerated. The school will pursue all avenues both formal and informal to ensure that children are assured of their right to attend school including the administration of penalty notices.
- Where a reasonable reason for absence is not given or where one cannot be attained despite reasonable attempts by the school absence may be recorded as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may lead to a penalty notice. Parents are made aware of this at the start of the academic year and where any concerns are raised.

Daily procedure

Each morning class registers are completed by the teachers using SIMS and are saved before classes go to assembly. By 9.15am all registers are printed by the Office Manager held in the office in case of a fire. In the case of a fire, a member of the office staff takes the registers outside and stands centrally in the playground so registers can be collected after a head count if necessary. Throughout the day, any amendments to the register are made to the paper copy so that these are, up to date at all times in case of a fire.

Absence and Punctuality

Illness and other legitimate reasons

If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact school as soon as possible, in person, by telephone or by letter. Verbal messages from other brothers or sisters or friends will not be accepted.

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency or for medical appointments, which are unavoidably in school time, but a request must be made so that an exit permit will can provided by the school. Appointment cards may be requested in order to authorise medical appointments.

Holidays

Holidays will not be authorised within term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Amendments to the 2006 Education act, has removed a Headteacher's ability to sanction term-time holidays. Where holidays are taken without authorisation fines may be issued.

Lateness

Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session. Children arriving after 9.00 a.m. will be marked as late in the register (L). Children arriving after 9.30am will be marked as unauthorised late in the register (U).

Celebrating Attendance and Punctuality

At Masefield we believe that it is important to recognise and celebrate good attendance. In addition to this and as recognition of the hard work of parents we also recognise improvements in attendance. The Head of School recognises and rewards improvements in attendance and punctuality of families she is working with. This may be through stickers, post cards home or discussions with parents.

Each week attendance and punctuality is celebrated during good news assembly.

Each term there is an award for all pupils with 100% attendance that term. This starts again each term in order to motivate pupils who may not have received the award in the previous term. At the

end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms, the children who have 100% for that term will be entered into a raffle for a prize. At the end of the academic year all pupils with 100% attendance for the year will be entered into a raffle for a large prize.

Communicating with Parents

At the start of each year and when any new child starts school, parents are given an attendance information, leaflet which outlines the school policy and procedures with regards to attendance. Parents are informed of weekly class awards via the school newsletter. The school's attendance policy and yearly figures are published on the school website.

Parents are informed termly via the termly reports and parent conferences about their child's attendance. Where there are concerns regarding attendance and punctuality, parents are informed of this via the Head of School.

In September the Head of School contacts parents of pupils who had attendance below 90% and caused concern in order to discuss attendance and how the family can be supported. Anyone with attendance below 94% in the previous year will be monitored throughout the year.

Monitoring Arrangements

Procedures for Monitoring Attendance

The attendance of pupils on the child protection register is monitored daily. Where a pupil is absent the Office Manager contacts the family and reports to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Each day the Office Manager runs an absence report. Where no reason for absence has been given the Office Manager contacts the parents requesting a reason and reiterating the procedures for informing school of absence. The following procedures are in place for persistent absence:

1. In September, a report is generated identifying pupils who have had less than 95% attendance during the course of the previous year. These children are closely monitored over the next academic year.
2. Each week the Head of School runs an attendance report which identifies pupils whose attendance is concern.
3. When a pupils absence reaches 10 sessions (5 days) parents are contacted, informed and notified that their attendance will be monitored. (Unless 5 unauthorised sessions are recorded on the register within a term or two consecutive half terms, then the Penalty Notice Procedure will be followed).
4. If absence reaches 20 sessions (10 days) parents are again contacted by the Head of School to discuss any ways that school can support parents. (Unless 5 unauthorised sessions are recorded on the register within a term or two consecutive half terms, then the Penalty Notice Procedure will be followed).
5. Where there are still concerns regarding attendance, next steps such as home visits are arranged.
6. If a child has regular absence through a medical condition and/or regular illness, then clarification should be sort if the form of a Doctor's letter. If a parent is reluctant to share medical information, then the school nurse should be contacted. They may then be able to conduct a health check on the child and offer support to the family.
7. If there is no improvement in attendance or a severe lack of parental engagement, then the case may be referred to Children's Services and a Child Action Meeting will be called. At this meeting, the concerns relating to poor attendance and any other issues will be shared with professionals.

Penalty Notice Procedures

From 1st September 2018, The Local Authority have changed the criteria for issuing a penalty notice for unauthorised absences. This has been reduced for 20 sessions (equivalent to 10 days) and a fine will now be considered where a pupil has had 10 sessions (equivalent of five days - consecutive or otherwise) of unauthorised absence over the period of two consecutive half terms. (Appendix 1)

Once a pupil has reached 5 unauthorised sessions of absence (including late after 9.30am), school can issue a Warning Notice. A warning notice is not required when a child is absent due to an unauthorised holiday.

Following the warning, if a further 5 sessions or more of unauthorised absence occur (a total of 10 over two consecutive half terms) a Penalty Notice can then be requested. Where a child is absent for an unauthorised holiday of more than 10 sessions, a Penalty Notice can be requested on their return to school.

A Penalty Notice can be requested for each parent.

The legal definitions of 'parent' are:

Any natural parent, whether married or not.

Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person.

Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days and increased to £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority must consider the commencement of legal proceedings for the offence to which the notice relates. The prosecution is not for the non-payment of the penalty notice but is for failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

Procedures for Monitoring Punctuality and Lateness

Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session. Children arriving after 9.00 a.m. will be marked as late in the register (L). Children arriving after 9.30am will be marked as unauthorised late in the register (U).

1. Classes will enter the school at 8:45. Doors will close at 8.55am.
2. When a child arrives late after 8.55am, parents and pupils should enter through the office. At this time pupils will receive an 'L' on the electronic register.
3. This will apply until 9:30 when any child arriving will be marked as 'U'. (Which is an unauthorised session).
4. The Office Manager records all incidences of lateness each day. If a child arrives late more than twice in a week, the class teacher will discuss this with the parent and punctuality will then be monitored.
5. If lateness continues or there have been a number of late marks throughout the half term parents will be contacted by the Head of School.
6. Where there are still concerns regarding punctuality, next steps such as home visits are arranged.

If a pupil is late being collected from school they are taken to the office after 10 minutes of lateness where they will then be collected by parents. If a child has not been collected by 3.45 and this is a recurring issue, the Head of School will also contact parents to discuss this and offer any further support. After 3.45pm the pupil may be placed in after school club and the parent charged for this facility.

Reporting

Each half term the Head of School compiles a report on attendance and punctuality and presents this to the SLT. This includes information about attendance and punctuality across the school, in classes and for individuals. It also details actions taken by the attendance officer in order to improve attendance and punctuality of groups of pupils and individuals. As part of the school monitoring and reporting the attendance and punctuality of Ever 6 pupils and SEN pupils is closely scrutinised and reported on. The Local Governing Board also receives a termly report.

COVID 19 Arrangements

During the COVID 19 pandemic, the school is committed to promoting good attendance where it is safe and proper to do so. School will support the measures to limit the spread of infection through supporting parents with guidance in relation to self isolation and absence from school.

During this time, school will use the Government guidance 'School attendance: main guidance' [\[1\]](#) to support the promotion of good attendance but also to navigate COVID related circumstances.

[\[1\] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance)

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Parents must contact school by 10am on each day of absence.

When your child's absence reaches 15 sessions (7 ½ days) you will be contacted and your child's attendance will be monitored.

If absence reaches 20 sessions (10 days) you will be contacted by the Head of School to discuss any ways that school can support parents.

Where there are still concerns regarding attendance, these will be referred to external agencies for support where appropriate.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

If no reason is given for absence or your child is absent for an unauthorised holiday or the reason given is not considered acceptable to authorise or they arrived late after 9.30am then your child will be given an unauthorised mark

If a child reaches 5 unauthorised sessions in a term or 2 consecutive half terms a penalty notice warning will be sent. Unless it is an unauthorised holiday then a warning is not required

If a further 5 sessions unauthorised absence are recorded (10 sessions in total in a term or 2 consecutive half terms) then a penalty notice can be requested. One for each parent.

LATENESS PROCEDURES

As part of safeguarding children, if a child arrives after 9am parents must accompany them to the school office.

If a child is late twice in a week the class teacher will discuss this with you and punctuality will be monitored.

If lateness continues or there have been a number of late marks throughout the half term you will be contacted by the School Attendance Officer.

Where there are still concerns regarding punctuality, these will be referred to the Head of School

Please note that where school is not contacted about an absence or a valid reason is not provided this may result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised which can result in a fine.