



Moss Hall Schools Federation

Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy

Coronavirus (COVID-19 update: Please note, Appendix A has been created in line with the current government guidance. Schools need to ensure that this template reflects any local guidance and the specific needs of their school. We understand that reopening schools to more pupils will be very challenging, and we will update any guidance in line with government advice.

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Roles and responsibilities
3. Definitions
4. Training of staff
5. Pupil expectations
6. Absence procedures
7. Contact information
8. Attendance register
9. Attendance officer
10. Lateness
11. Term-time leave
12. Leave during lunch times
13. Truancy
14. Missing children
15. Religious observances
16. Appointments
17. Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities
18. Young carers
19. Rewarding good attendance
20. Monitoring and review

Appendix

- a) Attendance Changes During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic
- b) Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Statement of intent

Moss Hall Schools believe that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

(a) to age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

Signed by:

_____ Executive Head of school

Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors

Date: _____

Review date: _____

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2018) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2018) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

1.2. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Primary Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- The implementation of the Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy and procedures of Moss Hall Schools.
- Ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' (2018) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

2.2. The Head of schools are responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy and procedures of the schools, and distributing these to parents.

- 2.3. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for:
- Following the Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy and ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
 - Modelling good attendance behaviour.
 - Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- 2.4. Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.
- 2.5. Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.
- 2.6. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:
- **“Absence”** as:
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Not attending school for any reason.
 - An **“authorised absence”** as:
 - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
 - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
 - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
 - An absence due to a family emergency.
 - An **“unauthorised absence”** as:
 - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
 - Truancy before or during the school day.
 - Absences which have never been properly explained.
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
 - Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
 - Leaving school for no reason during the day.
 - **“Persistent absenteeism”** as:
 - Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year **for any reason.**

4. Training of staff

- 4.1. The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction.
- 4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

5. Pupil expectations

- 5.1. Pupils are expected to attend school every day and will sign an agreement at when they join the school, to agree to keep their attendance at, or above, **96 percent** throughout the year.

6. Absence procedures

- 6.1. Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence.
- 6.2. Parents are required to send a note in on the first day that their child returns to school with a signed explanation of why they were absent; this is required even if the parent has already contacted the school via phone call.
- 6.3. A phone call will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their child's absence on the everyday that they do not attend school.
- 6.4. In the case of persistent absence, a letter from the attendance officer is sent. Then arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer and/or a member of the SLT if the persistent absence continues.
- 6.5. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.
- 6.6. If a pupil's attendance drops below **90 percent**, the **Local Authority Welfare officer** will be informed, and a formal meeting may be arranged with the parents.
- 6.7. Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

7. Contact information

7.1. Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.

8. Attendance register

8.1. The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

8.2. The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Education visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

8.1. When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

8.2. Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for **three** years.

9. Attendance officer

9.1. If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the local authority Education Welfare officer (EWO) who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement.

9.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the EWO has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

10. Lateness (See Addendum re. changes to start times for the autumn term 2020)

10.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

10.2. The school day starts at 8.55 in the Junior and Infant schools. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time. In the Junior school there is a “soft start” for all children between 8.45 and 8.55am

10.3. Registers are marked by 9:00. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

10.4. The register closes at 9.15. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.

10.5. After lunch, registers are marked by 1.30 Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

10.6. The register closes at 1:30. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

10.7. Pupils attending after 9:15 will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

11. Term-time leave

11.1. At **Moss Hall Schools**, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.

11.2. The heads of school are unable to authorise holidays during term-time.

11.3. The heads of school are only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the head of school will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.

11.4. The head of school will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the Head of School.

- 11.5. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
- 11.6. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
- Immediately before and during assessment periods
 - Immediately before or after a school holiday
 - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
 - Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason
- 11.7. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the head of school, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

12. Leave during lunch times

- 12.1. Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the head of school – it is at the head of school's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises. The likely reason is for an appointment and to avoid taking children out of school during curriculum time
- 12.2. Parents may be asked to take their child home for lunch if there are behaviour concerns. This will always be communicated to parents in writing and in conjunction with a behaviour plan.

13. Truancy

- 13.1. Truancy means any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
- 13.2. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.
- 13.3. All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8.55 am and 13:30, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.
- 13.4. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.
- 13.5. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting.
- 13.6. If truancy is suspected, the head of school is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.
- 13.7. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

14. Missing children

14.1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the head of school.

14.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the head of school immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the head of school.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms – the child's own classroom and corridor first
 - All toilets
 - Changing rooms & swimming pool area
 - The library
 - Outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes (infants) & 15 minutes (Juniors), then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.

- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
 - The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- 14.3. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
 - 14.4. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
 - 14.5. The head of school will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
 - 14.6. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
 - 14.7. The head of school will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
 - 14.8. Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the behaviour policy
 - 14.9. Prolonged periods of unauthorised absence without contact will be handled in accordance with clauses 6.6-6.8 of this policy.
 - 14.10. A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

15. Religious observances

- 15.1. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.
- 15.2. Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

16. Appointments

- 16.1. As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 16.2. Where this is not possible, a phonecall or an email will be sent to the school office.
- 16.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent.
- 16.4. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

17. Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities

- 17.1. Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, are required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises their absence(s).
- 17.2. Where a pupil requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing or running the activity/performance is required to request a licence from the LA.
- 17.3. The organiser is required to allow sufficient time for the LA to process the request – the LA will refuse to consider an application if the performance or activity is less than 21 days away.
- 17.4. The LA will only approve a licence application once it is satisfied that:
 - The pupil's education, health and wellbeing will not suffer; and
 - The conditions of the licence will be observed.
- 17.5. The LA will impose any conditions it considers necessary to ensure that the pupil is fit to take part in the performance/activity, that there will be proper provision for the pupil's wellbeing, and that the pupil's education will not suffer.
- 17.6. The school may on occasion make additional arrangements for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education but not on a routine basis, due to the additional workload burden this would put on teachers and the school.
- 17.7. The head of school will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent.
- 17.8. Where a licence has not been obtained, the head of school will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.
- 17.9. The maximum number of consecutive days that a child can perform is six – this applies to performances only.
- 17.10. The LA is responsible for enforcing all licence requirements; they may carry out inspections of the premises:
 - Where rehearsals during the performance period are taking place;
 - Where performances or activities are taking place; or
 - Where the pupil is receiving their education, in order to check that licensing conditions are being met.

18. Young carers

- 18.1. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.

- 18.2. The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.
- 18.3. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

19. Rewarding good attendance

- 19.1. Attendance of 96% and above is our expectation, hence we do not explicitly reward children for doing what is an expectation.

20. Monitoring and review

- 20.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 20.2. Moss Hall Schools' attendance target is 96 percent.
- 20.3. Details of our absence levels can be found on our website.
- 20.4. This policy is reviewed **every three years by the head of school**; the next scheduled review date for this policy is July 2023
- 20.5. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.

Attendance Changes During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

Please note, this appendix has been created in line with the current government guidance. Schools need to ensure that this template reflects any local guidance and the specific needs of their school. We understand that reopening schools to more pupils will be very challenging, and we will update any guidance in line with government advice.

Taking attendance during the coronavirus pandemic

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

To make sure schools record this accurately and consistently, we have made changes to the regulations governing school attendance registers to add a new category of non-attendance – 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- The following attendance and absence codes will be used until further notice:
 - X pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'
 - Y (Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances) – this code will be used if a pupil is eligible to attend but unable to do so as they are shielding, self-isolating, or if they have an EHC plan and a risk assessment has identified that their needs cannot be safely met in school
 - I (Illness) = this code will be used if the pupil cannot attend school due to illness
 - C (Leave of absence authorised by the school) – this code will be used if the pupil does not attend school despite being eligible, and is not shielding, self-isolating, unable to attend due to illness and an EHC plan risk assessment has not identified that their needs cannot be safely met and no other authorised absence code is appropriate

- D (Dual registered) – this code will be used if the pupil is attending another school where they are registered
- The school will complete the 'Educational setting status' form by midday each day to provide the DfE with accurate information on whether the school is open to eligible pupils and how many pupils it is caring for during this time.
- If a child that is expected to be in school does not attend, the school will contact the child's parents or primary carers to ensure the safety and security of the child.
- The school will work with the LA to ensure those who are expected to attend school are doing so, and any unexplained absences are dealt with using the correct channels.
- Parents will inform the school if their child (who is expected to attend school) is ill, and/or displaying symptoms of coronavirus, and is unable to attend school as a result.
- If a pupil lives with an extremely clinically vulnerable person, they will only be able to attend school if they adhere to a strict risk assessment
- **Under no circumstance will an individual enter the school grounds if they are displaying symptoms of coronavirus.**

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Moss Hall Schools have adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. A spreadsheet maintained by the Attendance Officers and is readily available to the SLT & safeguarding team. The school attendance officers will detail the daily and annual attendance to date in this document.
2. Contact is made with parents on every day of absence for any pupil absence not reported.
3. If a pupil's attendance falls below 96 percent, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The Attendance Officer may phone parent / carer to discuss attendance at this point.
4. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, the EWO is contacted by the Attendance Officer. Jointly, they discuss further action. This may be a letter from the school or the EWO or the parent may be invited into an attendance meeting with the attendance officer and the EWO.
5. The pupil's attendance is monitored for the next half term.
6. After the monitoring period, if targets are not met, the Attendance Officer will meet with the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed. If there are no further improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents by the EWO. A fixed-penalty notice may be issued or the parent may be summoned to a court hearing.

Note The LA can issue Fixed Penalty notices for

- Truancy
- Parentally condoned absences
- Holidays taken in term-time without the agreement of the head teacher
- Delay in returning from extended holidays without the agreement of the head teacher
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed.

September 2020 staggered starts and end of day arrangements

Moss Hall Infants

		Arrival				Departure		
	Class/Group	Gate/SLT	Entrance	Time	Door	Gate/SLT	Home Time	Gate
Reception	Spiders R	SK	Main Gate	08:45	Reception	ST	15:00	Main Gate
	Ladybirds R		Main Gate	08:45	Reception		15:00	Main Gate
	Honeybees R		Main Gate	08:50	Reception		15:05	Main Gate
	Butterflies R		Main Gate	08:50	Reception		15:05	Main Gate
Year 1	Dragonflies 1	ST	Bottom Gate	08:45	Year 1	SK LC	15:00	Bottom Gate
	Crickets 1		Bottom Gate	08:45	Year 1		15:00	Bottom Gate
	Caterpillars 1	LC	Car Park	08:50	Year 1		15:05	Car Park
	Fireflies 1		Car Park	08:50	Year 1		15:05	Car Park
Year 2	Beetles 2	SK	Main Gate	08:55	Year 2	ST	15:10	Main Gate
	Hoverflies 2		Main Gate	08:55	Year 2		15:10	Main Gate
	Grasshoppers 2		Main Gate	09:00	Year 2		15:15	Main Gate
	Centipedes 2		Main Gate	09:00	Year 2		15:15	Main Gate

Moss Hall Juniors

	Start of the day					Hometime				
	Gate/SLT	Entrance	Time	Door	Register Closes	Gate/SLT	Exit	Home Time	Waiting Space	Gate
Year 3	Phidi	Essex Park	08:45	Library	09:05	RM/ LW	Library	15:20	Bottom PG Shed Side	Essex Park
Year 4	Phidias	Essex Park	08:35	Library	08:55	RM/ LW	Library	15:10	Bottom P Shed Side	Essex Park
Year 5	GP	Nether Street	08:35	Swimming	08:55	SC	Swimming	15:10	Bottom P Hall Side	Nether Street
Year 6	GP	Nether Street	08:45	Swimming	09:05	SC	Swimming	15:20	Bottom P Hall Side	Nether Street