

# MILFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Attendance Policy



**Care, Share, Respect, Learn**

Reviewed and updated	<b>September 2024</b>	<b>Emma Roberts (HT)</b>
Approved by Governors	<b>December 2024</b>	<b>FGB/031224/06</b>
Previous version	July 2021	
Origin	School created with LA wording in some parts	

## Statement of Intent

Milford Primary School firmly believes that good school attendance is essential to facilitate teaching and learning. We believe pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to school attendance are complex and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school therefore we prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school alongside building strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents/carers.

## Principles

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is a criminal offence by the parent.

Children may be reluctant to attend the school sometimes. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child.

If problems with attendance arise, parents/ carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together.

The school will provide a variety of support for the child and family – this may include engaging with children’s social care if there are safeguarding concerns.

## IMPORTANT NOTE

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers must not give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM available from the school office or website. This should be handed in **TWO school weeks before the first date of the requested absence** whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. Absence deemed for the reason of unauthorised leave in term time will be marked in the register with the Attendance code G.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

SEE Appendix 1 for more information:

Letter to parents regarding most recent penalty information 2024.

## Legal framework

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

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963 • DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy • Children Missing Education Procedure

## Definitions

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED OR UNAUTHORISED. This is why parents must provide information about the cause of each absence. In addition to comply with safeguarding requires, the school need to know why children are absent from school.

### **Absence:**

Arrival at school after the register has closed

Not attending school for any reason.

### **Authorised absence:**

An absence for illness for which the school has granted leave

A medical or dental appointment, which unavoidably falls during school term time, for which the school has granted leave  
Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave  
An absence due to family emergency

### **Unauthorised absence:**

Arrival after the register has closed  
Absence due to term-time day trips or holidays which have not been agreed by the school  
Absences which have not been properly explained  
Absences for which school has not granted permission

## **Procedures**

If your child is not able to attend school you should contact the office on the morning of the absence by phone, by email or in person. This should be done by 9.45 am.

The school gate opens at **8.45am**.

**All children are expected to be in school by 8.55am.**

If a child arrives late, they should report to the office.

A late mark is given for children arriving after 8.55am. If they arrive after the register closes at 9.25 am, they will be marked as 'absence after the register closes' and this will affect their attendance percentage.

The afternoon register opens at 1.00pm and closes at 1.30pm.

**Reporting an absence** - If your child is not able to attend school you should contact **the office** on the morning of the absence by phone, by email or in person. **This should be done by 9.45 am.**

If the school does not receive notification of a child's absence by 9.45 am, a message will be sent via Parent Hub asking the parent/carer to contact school. If school has not received a response by mid-morning, we will attempt to contact parents/carers by telephone. If school is unable to ascertain the safety of a child, the matter will be referred to the headteacher who will take a variety of actions depending on individual cases.

Actions could include:

- contacting a known friend of the family
- contacting the child's social worker or Family Support worker

- ultimately contacting the police

## Request for leave (including holiday leave)

It is an expectation that parents/carers take family holidays in the 13 weeks that children have for such purposes and not during the 39 school weeks. Where there are exceptional circumstances for absence, parents/carers should explain these to the Headteacher in writing.

Parents/ carers are expected to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible parents will be expected to obtain approval for such appointments as far in advance as practicable.

Any requests for leave (including holiday requests) should be made on the Leave Of Absence Request Form available from the school office or website. This should be returned to the school office at least two weeks prior to the leave date and prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made.

As noted above: In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers must not give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school will follow the latest guidance from the local authority when issuing Penalty Notices.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

## Support and Monitoring

The Headteacher is ultimately responsible for attendance in school. All staff are expected to encourage good attendance in school.

Absence is regularly monitored by the Headteacher and where a child's attendance falls below 90% without good reason, parents/ carers will be contacted by letter. We will deal with any persistent absence sensitively but without compromising the expectations of the school. The school will work in tandem with Local Authority Inclusion Support Advisors to provide support to improve attendance.

If attendance is causing a concern, the school may require evidence in the form of a doctor's letter for absences.

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupil's attendance. Where support measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice.

Where attendance doesn't improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher.

## Appendix one: Letter Parents September 2024



### Milford Primary School

*Care, Share, Respect, Learn!*

Chevin Road, Milford, Belper, Derbyshire,  
DE56 0QH

Tel: 01332 841316

Headteacher: Ms Emma Roberts

e-mail: [eroberts@milford.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:eroberts@milford.derbyshire.sch.uk)

[www.milfordprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.milfordprimaryschool.co.uk)

16 September 2024

### **Important Update: changes to penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school and poor attendance**

Dear parents/carers

I am writing to inform you about the changes that have been put in to place this August by the government, with regard to pupils' absence from school, either due to unauthorised absence in term-time or for poor attendance.

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers must not give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Our school policy is that any requests for term time leave should be made on a **Leave of Absence Request Form** available from the school office (or website) and handed in **2 school weeks** before the first date of the requested absence. You must have received written authorisation from myself before your child can be absent from school.

From this term, September 2024, we will be following Derbyshire County Council's policy, which is summarised below:

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should:

- leave of **5 days or more** be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or;
- where **repeated incidents** of leave in term time **for less than 5 days** occur or;
- where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider **poor attendance that meets the legal threshold** (10 sessions within 10 weeks-1 session is a morning or an afternoon).

Absence deemed for the reason of unauthorised leave in term time will be marked in the register with the Attendance code G. You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

**Please also be aware of the following significant changes to national policy – which Derbyshire County Council follow:**

- There has been an increase in the penalty notice fine. It is now £160 per child, per parent (this reduces to £80 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days).
- If you receive a 2nd penalty notice fine (within a rolling 3-year period) there is a flat rate of £160 per child, per parent (there isn't an option of a reduction).
- If the national threshold is met for a 3<sup>rd</sup> time within 3 years, you may be prosecuted.

Kind regards

Emma Roberts  
Headteacher