

Marsden Infant and Nursery School



Attendance Policy 2026

Date of Review: September 2027

Date of Implementation: September 2026

Date Approved by Governors: October 2025

Policy Reviewer: Senior Leadership – led by Headteacher

1. References & Research

- "Children at Risk of Missing Education" Statutory Guidance local authorities. DfE September 2016
- "Schoolattendance parental responsibility measures" Statutory guidance for local authorities, schoolleaders, schoolstaff, governing bodies and the police, DfE May 2020
- Education Act 1996, Section 444
- Working together to improve attendance – September 2022
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance February 2023
- "A Guide to Absence Statistics." DfE January 2023
- "Keeping Children Safe in Education" DfE Statutory Guidance for Academies and Colleges, September 2022
- "Working together to Safeguard Children" July 2022
- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework May 2019 September 2022
- Schoolinspection handbook September 2022

2. Rationale

It is well recognised that good, consistent attendance at school is crucial to a child or young person's future prospects. Reducing absence from school continues to be a priority both nationally and locally, because missing school damages students' attainment levels, disrupts routines and affects the learning of others.

Marsden Infant and Nursery school is committed to providing a quality education for all our pupils and ensuring that learners and their families understand the importance of punctuality and full attendance at school.

Marsden Infant and Nursery school will work relentlessly to ensure learners are in school as much as possible, working in partnership with parents/carers and partner agencies to identify and remove any obstacles or barriers that interfere with high attendance in a prompt and timely manner.

3. Aims of the Attendance Policy

To ensure that every child is safe and has their right to education protected (this may involve working with external agencies)

To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality

4. Roles & Responsibilities

4.1 Governing Body Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the school to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure all legal frameworks and statutory guidelines are followed
- Monitor attendance figures on at least a termly basis.
- Hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

4.2 The Headteachers' Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to:

- Ensure all legal frameworks and statutory guidelines are followed.
- Maintain accurate records, ensuring that a robust and rigorous system for predicting and analysing poor attendance of key cohorts is in place
- Develop an attendance strategy personalised to the school which includes procedures to follow for staff, model letters and communications for parents and details of support on offer to pupils and families
- Authorised exclusions and have oversight of partial timetables, placements in AP, and students moving off the roll of the academy, e.g., Managed Moves (MM), Elective Home Education (EHE), Children Missing Education (CME), etc.
- Support staff with monitoring the attendance.
- Authorise fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Undertake QA and accountability checks on registers and to monitor the implementation of the attendance strategy
- Authorise any amendments to the school attendance register.

4.4 The School Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the school to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence. Ensure every pupil has access to the education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Encourage and support parent/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory schoolage who are registered at the school attend regularly
- Register pupils twice daily accurately and efficiently
- Review attendance and punctuality data on a daily basis
- Involve external agencies (where appropriate), in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them
- Ensure all stakeholders understand the importance and impact of good attendance and punctuality
- Address underperformance/concerns swiftly.

4.5 The pupils' and parent and carers responsibilities;

It is the responsibility of the family to:

- Aim to have an excellent attendance (97%) and punctuality record for which there will be appropriate rewards.
- Be on the school site on time and ready to learn.
- For pupils who arrive late to school, families must follow the correct procedures for recording their lateness and explain to staff so that any help can be given
- Follow the correct procedures for recording medical appointments
- Response to phone calls/home visits when it is necessary for school to complete welfare checks
- Where practicably possible avoid booking medical appointments during school hours
- Book family holidays during school holidays
- Engage with school and other agencies to support improvements in attendance, if needed
- Inform the school on each day of absence and state the reason
- Discuss planned absences with school and complete and submit a leave of absence request form in advance
- Provide two emergency contact numbers that are updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides for safeguarding purposes.

5. Attendance Register

School keep attendance registers, and place all pupils onto this register, as they come onto the roll of the school. The register is kept and maintained in schools' Management Information Systems (MIS), currently Integrus. An attendance register is recorded at the start of the first morning session of each school day and once during the first session in the afternoon. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent, including a reason if known
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

In general, teachers take the register at the start of the morning and afternoon session. The business team completes the register each day and adds in any additional information.

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

6. Lateness & Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed this will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

7. Unauthorised Absence

If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether that absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parents/carers may not authorise any absence. The Local Authority supports the use of Penalty Notices in cases of persistent unauthorised absence and/ or persistent lateness. An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if:

- The school has not given approval in advance for a pupil to be absent
- The school does not authorise a holiday

Parents/carers should be informed if the absence is to be recorded as unauthorised.

8. Following up Absences

8.1 Following up Absences

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary including following up with emergency contacts and home visits if parent/carer contact is not responding or concerns remain
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

Where an absence is unplanned and there is no or insufficient communication with the school, a member of SLT will follow up on this with the parent/carer and will refer to the appropriate authority should this be needed; for example, referring to the Child Missing in Education (CME) team at the Local Authority.

8.2 Work to Address Poor Attendance (Persistent Absences)

Marsden Infant and Nursery school will work with families to address persistence absence in the following ways;

- Adopting the attendance policy in line with Department for Education expectations
- Efforts made to support the pupil and family will be evidenced
- An Attendance Strategy which includes procedures and systems used to reward
- Good attendance and prevent, improve and address poor attendance
- Meetings with parents/carers which clearly state what is expected from all parties concerned. These expectations should be reasonable and have a clear timeframe. Plans should also include what additional support will be provided by the school and (where appropriate) other agencies. All of this must be evidenced.
- Model letters evidencing a step-up approach including a "final warning letter" advising parents that they have failed to co-operate and that the school intends to request prosecution by the Local Authority

8.3 Factors that may Impact Attendance

Marsden Infant and Nursery school will give consideration of the issues that may impact on attendance. This is by no means an exhaustive list but could include:

- Parents/carers having mental health issues or being elderly or infirm
- Any special educational needs the child may have
- If a child has significant anxiety issues
- Child safeguarding concerns (should there be concerns that a child will be forced into marriage whilst abroad support should be sought from the Local Authority)
- Poverty

None of these factors would by themselves prevent prosecution but may indicate that attendance concerns should be addressed using other strategies such as:

- Multi-agency approaches (Single Assessment / Early Support Assessment)
- Referral to appropriate agencies
- Referral to the Single Point of Referral (SPR) panel
- Support available from the Attendance & Student Support Service (APSS) as part of traded services

Marsden Infant and Nursery school will consider these options prior to a prosecution taking place as evidenced through the use of a parent contract or similar. Prosecution should not be considered where parents/carers appear to be making genuine and consistent efforts to improve their child's attendance.

8.4 Returning to school After a Long-Term Absence

Children who are returning after a long-term absence will be supported by Marsden Infant and Nursery school through a variety of strategies/interventions which may include the following: parental contracts, part-time timetables (for up to six weeks), home tuition, Health Care Plans and joint working with external agencies. A meeting will be

held involving a representative from the school and parent/carers to decide on the level of support which can be offered.

9. Legal Sanctions

9.1 Sanctions

There are several sanctions that school can take to address the issue of nonattendance. To try and identify the reason for absence we will always talk to you first to identify the reason for absence. Academies will always ensure the escalated process map is followed, focusing on the support a child needs at each stage (please access on the school website). However, for lack of engagement in attendance support there are sanctions that will be followed:

- Kirklees LA [Penalty notices for school absence | Kirklees Council](#)

9.2. Penalty Notices

A penalty notice is a fine issued to parents or carers for their child's unauthorised absence from school. A penalty notice is an alternative to being prosecuted under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. In Kirklees, penalty notices are most often used for unauthorised holidays in term time.

Penalty notices are sent through the post. The penalty notice contains information explaining how and where to pay.

All penalty notices must be issued within the local Code of Conduct. You can get a copy of the Kirklees Code of Conduct from the Attendance & Pupil Support Service Taking children out of school during term time

The law was changed in 2013 and made it clear that head teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. You should not take your children out of school during term time unless you are granted authorised leave of absence by the head teacher.

If you do take your child out of school without the leave of absence being authorised, the head teacher may direct the Council to take measures to issue either a penalty notice or prosecute you as parents.

In certain circumstances, schools may remove the child from the register if leave of absence is taken for an unreasonable amount of time.

Responsibility for paying the penalty notice

The parent/carer named on the letter and on the invoice is responsible for paying the penalty notice. If penalty notices have been issued to two parents at the same address, each individual parent is responsible for paying their own penalty notice.

On most occasions, penalty notices are issued to each individual parent/carer of each individual child separately.

Under Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 a parent is defined as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- And any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

How much a penalty notice costs

The penalty notice is for £80, per parent, per child which rises to £160 if you don't pay within 21 days. If you don't pay the fine after 28 days you may be prosecuted (under Section 444 of the Education Act) for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. You will receive a separate summons for this which will give you notice of the time and date of the court hearing.

You must pay the whole of the amount owing in one payment - you cannot pay in instalments and you cannot pay part of the penalty notice.

Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the local authority commencing legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular school attendance. If found guilty, you may be fined up to £2,500 and you will receive a criminal record.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Withdrawal of a penalty notice

A penalty notice can only be withdrawn if it is shown that it should not have been issued to you or has not been issued to you in accordance with the local Code of Conduct.

If you believe that a penalty notice has been wrongly issued to you as a result of a leave of absence, you should raise this with the school in the first instance. If a penalty notice is not withdrawn and you do not pay it, you will be liable to prosecution for the offence that your child has failed to attend school regularly.

Appeals

There is no statutory right of appeal once a Penalty Notice has been issued.

9.3 Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviours Act 2003) Penalty Notices

will be considered when:

A child is absent from school for the purpose of a Leave of Absence in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the academy.

- A child has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further absence has occurred following written warning to improve
- A child has been suspended or excluded from the school and is found in a public place with no justifiable reason.

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Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Kirklees, Calderdale and Oldham Council protocols dependent on the location of the academy.

9.4 Prosecution

Where intervention through the schools process fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the local authority will be notified and legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under section 444/4441 (a) of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring their child's attendance at Marsden Infant and Nursery School.

Section 4441 (a) of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if they are a registered student at an school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

School will work with the Local Authority to make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. If needed we may use any of the following;

These are: • Parenting contracts

- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices

Please refer to chapter 6 of the DFE Working together to improve school attendance 2024 for more information.

9.5 Penalty Notices (Evidential Requirements for Irregular School Attendance) Poor attendance not related to leave can have many complex underlying factors related to the child, and is generally either ordinary (where the parent/carer is unaware, e.g. their child may be truanting) or aggravated (where the parent is knowingly colluding with the child).

The expectation is that the school follows similar processes to those required for prosecution. It may be felt that a penalty notice is a more measured initial response than moving straight to prosecution. Where an school wishes to seek a penalty notice for irregular attendance, there must be a clear and obvious route of progression. For example:

- The pupil has had more than 10% unauthorised absence within a continuous six-week period

- Support has been offered by school and/or other agencies
- All reasonable attempts have been made to engage the parent and provide opportunities for the parent to address the poor attendance
- Parental contracts have been offered which were clear in the expectations of the parent and the support that would be offered
- DfE guidance on the use of parenting contracts has been followed
- Parents have been made aware of the legal sanctions available including the possibility of a penalty notice being issued
- The pursuit of an Education Supervision Order or a Parenting Order may be inappropriate

9.6 Penalty Notices (Unauthorised Leave of Absence)

Penalty notices may be used including where the child does not return by the agreed date – in this case:

- All of the leave should be marked as unauthorised unless there are clear mitigating circumstances, e.g. delayed flights.
- Where parents continue to take unauthorised leave of absence, despite having previously been issued with a penalty notice. Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if they are a registered student at an school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007 set out the details of how the penalty notice scheme must operate, and that all penalty notices must be issued in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct. All potential consequences resulting from unauthorised leave must be clearly communicated and explained to parents.

Parents must be made aware of:

- The possibility of a penalty notice being issued (to each parent for each child)
- The possibility of losing the school place, and the likelihood of being readmitted to the school
- The possibility of prosecution under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 for repeat offences of unauthorised leave of absence
- The possibility of a fine of up to £2,500 and receipt of a criminal record if the fine remains unpaid and the matter is heard in court
- Penalty notices may be issued if parents have not sought permission from the Headteacher before taking their child out of school
- for leave during term-time
- If the Headteacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway
- If a pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation

Where the individual leave of absence has been recorded by the school as unauthorised in the attendance register on at least 10 consecutive school sessions (5 schooldays; this can be split over weekends or school holidays)

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10. Reporting to Parents

We follow DfE guidance in relation to reporting annually on attendance and absence to all students, see here for current guidance. We provide a quantitative report to parents/carers on their child's attendance record at the end of each year.

11. Use of Attendance Data

We collect and store attendance data and use it to better understand pupils. For example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Track the attendance of year groups and pupil groups
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absence may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support
- Understand whether there are particular issues relating to reasons for absence, e.g. high illness levels etc.
- Look at attendance in conjunction with assessment data to understand any obstacles to pupils progressing in their learning.
- Sharing with other education settings for application purposes.

Attendance will be part of SLT meetings and form agendas to identify causes for concern and/or areas of strategic success. Pupil -level absence data will be collected each term via the school census and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will regularly compare attendance and absence data to national and local averages.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and, as guidance from the Local Authorities or DfE is updated. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governors.

14. Appendix 3

Attendance Codes from the DfE (September 2024 onwards)

Code	Definition	Attendance Scenario
/	Present (AM)	Student present at morning session
\	Present (PM)	Student present at afternoon session
L	Late arrival	The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed.
K	Educational Provision	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school at which they are a registered pupil. A pupil attending provision arranged by the school rather than the local authority must be recorded using Codes P or B instead. Schools must also record the nature of the provision, examples are: - attending courses at college; - attending unregistered alternative provision such as home tutoring.
B	Off-site educational activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience. The activity must be of an educational nature. Academies must record the nature of the activity; eg Taster days at other schools.
D	Dual registered	Student attending another setting where they are registered
J 1	Interview	Absent with leave to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit organised or approved by the school
W	Work experience	The Student is on a work experience placement
Code	Definition	Authorised Absence Scenario
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student granted leave of absence due to exceptional circumstance
C1	Employment	Student is granted leave of absence to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during School hours
C2	Part time timetable	All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their needs.
E	Excluded	Student suspended or permanently excluded from school, but still on admission register, and no AP provision has been made. Day 6 code as D where provision made.

I	Illness	Student is ill and school has been notified
M	Medical or dental appointment	Student has a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves).
S	Study leave	Student is Year 11 and on leave due to exams
T	Gypsy, Roma or Traveller absence	The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.
Code	Definition	Absent – Unable to attend School because of unavoidable causes

Q	Access Arrangements	Student unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements by the LA to facilitate their attendance
Y1	Transport disruption	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available.
Y2	Widespread disruption	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency.
Y3	Premises closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.
Y4	Whole school closure	Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed.
Y5	Criminal justice detention	The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing • Detained under a sentence of detention.

Y6	Public health guidance	The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be: - Contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the equivalent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), - Prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.
Y7	Unavoidable cause	An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school. This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at school does not, in itself, mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause
Code	Definition	Unauthorised Absence Scenario
G	Unauthorised holiday	The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday.
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code must be amended when a reason emerges or replaced with "O" for unauthorised)
O	Unauthorised absence	The school is not satisfied with reason for students' absence
U	Arrived after registration	Student arrived at the school after registers had closed
Code	Definition	Other Absence Scenario
X	Not required to attend	Students of non-compulsory age are not required to attend
Y	Absent due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed. Significant disruption to travel as a result of a national/local emergency or the student is in custody
Z	Student not on admissions register	Register set up but student not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial closure of the school such as half-term, bank holidays or INSET day

