Marlbrook Primary School

Little Dewchurch CE Primary School

St Martin's Primary School

Attendance Policy
September 2022

CEO : Ms T A Kneale CBE
Executive Headteacher : Mrs S Jenkins

Attendance Policy
Marlbrook, Little Dewchurch and St Martin's Primary Schools

1. Aims

Marlbrook Primary, St Martin's Primary and Little Dewchurch Primary will :
- ✓ Ensure a warm, welcoming atmosphere, in which children are valued and encouraged to attend regularly;
- ✓ Provide an agreed framework for procedures which is understood and followed by staff, parents and pupils;
- ✓ Monitor attendance and punctuality of pupils on a regular basis;
- ✓ Provide support for parents and pupils who are experiencing difficulties with attendance / punctuality;
- ✓ Liaise with colleagues and other agencies to ensure that the monitoring process is fully implemented.

Parents/Carers will:
- ✓ Ensure that children attend school regularly and arrive on time;
- ✓ Keep the school informed about their child's absence via letter, telephone call or personal visit;
- ✓ Book family holidays during school holiday time**;**
- ✓ Contact the school for a confidential meeting if they are experiencing difficulties with attendance or punctuality with their child or children.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.

- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Regular attendance at school and a high level of punctuality is essential if children are to fully participate in the learning opportunities offered at Marlbrook Primary, St Martin's Primary and Little Dewchurch CE Primary.

High standards of attendance and punctuality are expected and attainment of such is monitored on an individual basis using the agreed school procedures.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures . These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- ✓ Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- ✓ Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- ✓ Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- ✓ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- ✓ The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also :

- refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold,

- refers to the DfE document "Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance" published May 2022 for application from September 2022, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073619/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf

- refers to the DfE document "Working together to improve school attendance, published May 2022 for application from September 2022, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073616/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

By law it is the duty of parents/carers to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time, and as such we prefer to reward **GOOD** attendance and punctuality. However, the school has a responsibility to put in place procedures to deal with persistent lateness and poor attendance.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher and CEO to account for the implementation of this policy.

Attendance figures are presented to Governors via Dropbox for analysis and discussion. Sue Jenkins (Executive Head and DSL) has responsibility for meeting with the Student Support Team to ensure that all absence is 'tracked' and pupils supported to attend regularly.

3.2 The CEO/Executive Headteacher

The CEO/Executive Headteacher is responsible for:

- ✓ Implementation of this policy at the school
- ✓ Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governors
- ✓ Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- ✓ Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The DSL / Executive Head

The DSL / Executive Head:

- ✓ Monitors attendance data across the schools and at an individual pupil level
- ✓ Reports concerns about attendance to the CEO
- ✓ Works with education welfare officers (LA Enforcement Team) to tackle persistent absence
- ✓ Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues (via Student Support)
- ✓ Advises the CEO / Executive HT when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers

Classteachers are responsible for recording attendance on a twice daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. Calls will also be taken by Student Support and Marlbrook has a dedicated mobile phone specifically to record absence calls.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. The Collaboration use the Scholarpack tool for recording attendance.

With the current pandemic (Covid 19), the schools are also recording positive PCR cases and periods of required isolation.

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

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
- ✓ The original entry
- ✓ The amended entry
- ✓ The reason for the amendment
- ✓ The date on which the amendment was made
- ✓ The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for a minimum of 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

At Marlbrook and St Martin's the school doors are opened and teachers welcome the children from 8.30am until 8.40am when the doors are closed to ensure the safety and well-being of all our children. Any children arriving after this time must enter school through the main entrance door by the school office, and be signed in by the admin staff.

School lessons commence at 8.45am. The school day finishes at 3.15pm. This is in accordance with statutory regulations for schools to be open for 32.5 hours per week.

At Little Dewchurch the children line up at 8.40am and are escorted into class by their teachers to commence lessons at 8.45am.

If children are absent, we request that parents/carers telephone school on the first day of absence, giving reasons for absence and if possible an indication of how long the absence will last. If we do not receive a phone call we will telephone home to check that everything is alright. If we are unable to make contact with you then we will send you a letter asking why your child was off school. If we do not receive a reply the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. In some circumstances we may do a home visit to check on the safety and well-being of the child(ren).

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by as soon as practically possible (see also section 7), via telephone call or answerphone message **(Attendance mobile number : 0747 070 8788)**

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

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.

Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and 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 will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

There will inevitably be occasions where children arrive late for school, and as a school we appreciate this. However, there are unfortunately some children who persistently arrive late. It is essential for the child to be in class for the start of lessons, if they are to gain the maximum benefit from the curriculum, and thus achieve their full potential academically. It is embarrassing for a child to enter a class that is already engaged in an activity and also distracting for the rest of the class if children are persistently late and the class teacher has to stop lessons to welcome latecomers.

As previously mentioned, lateness is recorded on the registers if children arrive after **8.45am.** Concerns regarding punctuality are dealt with in the same way as

attendance concerns, and will therefore be reported to the Executive Head/DSL as a matter of course. Letters will be sent to parents from the Executive Head.

4.5 Following up absence

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, by telephone, email and/or letter.
- The Student Support team will endeavor to contact families who have not contacted school on the first day of absence.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Marlbrook report pupil attendance annually in the end of year report (published in July).

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The CEO / Executive Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the CEO / Executive Headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

1. Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail);
2. Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart;
3. Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat

dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

If children are continually absent from school with no reason given we may do a home visit to ascertain the whereabouts of the children, and discuss with parents the importance of bringing children to school.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, Local Authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.

> One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.

> Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Rewards for Good Attendance at Marlbrook

- Attendance prizes drawn out of a prize draw for the children with 100% attendance for a half term, one from Key Stage 1 and two from Key Stage 2.
- Attendance certificates are given to all children achieving 100% attendance for a whole term.
- Special Headteacher prizes and certificates are awarded to children who achieve 100% for the full year.
- Weekly certificates are awarded to the class with the highest attendance in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Weekly prizes are awarded to one child drawn out of a prize draw for 100% attendance in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- The class with the highest attendance each term is rewarded with a pizza lunch.
- The highest class attendance for the term is rewarded with an attendance trophy.

Rewards for Good Attendance at Little Dewchurch
- Book token prizes are given to children with 100% attendance for a term, drawn out of a prize draw - one from Key Stage 1 and one from Key Stage 2.
- Attendance certificates are given to all children achieving 100% attendance for a half term.

Rewards for Good Attendance at St Martin's
- Attendance prizes drawn out of a prize draw for the children with 100% attendance for a half term, 1 from Key Stage 1 and 2 from Key Stage 2.
- Attendance certificates are given to all children achieving 100% attendance for a whole term.
- Special Headteacher prizes and certificates are awarded to children who achieve 100% for the full year.
- Weekly certificates are awarded to the class with the highest attendance in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Weekly prizes are awarded to one child drawn out of a prize draw for 100% attendance in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- The class with the highest attendance each term is rewarded with a pizza lunch.

7. Attendance monitoring

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term 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 compare attendance data to the national average and where available the Local Authority data, and share this with the Governing Board.

The Executive Head/DSL is responsible for monitoring every child's attendance and punctuality. Letters are sent to parents if the school is not notified of the reason for the child's absence. If letters are not returned and/or there are concerns regarding attendance, parents may be requested to attend a meeting with the Executive Head/DSL. All attendance patterns are reviewed weekly by the DSL, Executive Headteacher and CEO.

Children who are frequently absent or who demonstrate patterns of irregular attendance, even if these are accompanied by letters from parents, are noted by class teachers and concerns reported to the Executive Head.

The Executive Head / Executive Deputy Head will then, depending on the individual situation:
- ✓ Send a series of letters home to the parent, expressing concern and offering support,
- ✓ Discuss individual cases with the Student Support team,
- ✓ Meet with parents,
- ✓ If attendance does not improve, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer/LA Enforcement Team, who will continue to monitor attendance on the school's behalf, taking legal action where necessary.

The Executive Head/DSL meets with the Student and Family Support team fortnightly and at this meeting individual records are checked to ascertain whether or not attendance is improving, and :
- ✓ If there are any specific reasons for lack of attendance (e.g. hospital admission),
- ✓ If letters to parents are having an impact,
- ✓ If future absences should be recorded as unauthorised absences,
- ✓ If a home visit is required.

Miscellaneous

- Children attending medical/dental appointments are marked absent if their appointment takes place during the registration period.

- If the child's appointment takes place **AFTER** the registration period, they are marked present but recorded in the signing out book held at the School Office, which must be filled in by parents as they collect the child.

- No child will be allowed to leave school for appointments without an accompanying adult during the school day. All children leaving school early

for visits/appointments **MUST** be recorded in the signing out book in the School Office.

- Occasional requests for early dismissal are sometimes unavoidable and will be authorised. However, all requests for early dismissal must be authorised by the Executive Headteacher or Deputy Head. If the frequency of requests from individual parents becomes a cause for concern, permission will not be granted for early dismissal.

- Children attending classes elsewhere (e.g. Blackmarston, Brookfield etc), are marked as being educated off site. In terms of the pupil's annual attendance figures, this does not negatively impact on their overall annual attendance percentage.

- Holidays in term time will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. These must be approved by the Executive Headteacher.

- The school registration system allows us to authorise some absences using the category "C" for "other authorised circumstances". This classification is used sparingly and with discretion for absences such as close family bereavement, immediate family weddings or religious observances. **Birthdays and shopping trips are not legitimate reasons for absence and will therefore be unauthorised**. In such cases, class teachers are urged to seek advice from the Executive Headteacher.

Whilst this policy aims to be as comprehensive as possible, there will inevitably be occasions and situations that are not covered by the above policy and procedures. In such instances, the Executive Headteacher will, if necessary, seek advice from other agencies and determine a course of action.

Our Collaboration of Schools uses Scholarpack to collect and store attendance data and use it for internal purposes. For example, to :

- Track the attendance of individual pupils,
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern,
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Whilst the data is primarily for internal purposes, it can be requested by Social Care, in the event of social care concerns or by the legal system/police.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Sue Jenkins (Executive Head and DSL).

At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

> Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

> Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Additional codes are currently being used related to Covid 19 :

Self isolation – X02

Confirmed case - I02

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day