



## **Attendance Procedure**

### INTRODUCTION

At Martins Wood School, we want the whole school community – governors, staff, parents and pupils - to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality. Good attendance helps the children in this school community to maximise their learning. Martins Wood School are committed to working with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships. This policy will support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality and allow all our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

### ATTENDANCE TARGET

Our aim is to keep whole school attendance above 96%.

### EXPECTATIONS

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents and pupils. All these groups need to understand the expectations this policy places on them.

The expectations for school will include:

- To provide a safe learning environment with an effective whole school culture of high attendance
- To maintain attendance records according to Government legislation and guidance, on a daily basis
- To follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality, including welfare checks if required
- To ensure every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for attendance
- To keep parents/carers informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance and absence record
- To implement this policy fairly and consistently

The expectations for parents will include:

- To ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn
- To inform school on the each day of absence, of the reason for their child's absence from school, by 9.30am at the latest
- To work in partnership with the school to resolve issues and help the school to understand their child's barriers to attendance
- To ensure that school are informed of any changes of contact details

The expectations for pupils may include:

- To attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually
- To be ready and willing to learn

### DOORS AND REGISTERS

School doors open at 8.55am and pupils may enter the building at that time. Pupils should not arrive at school before 8.45 am. School officially starts at 9.00 am. Registers are called at 9.00am in all classes and again at 1.25pm in Early Years Classes and Key Stage One, and 1.35pm in Key Stage Two. Registers close 30 minutes after these times. Registers are marked consistently by staff. Any pupil arriving after closure of the register will be marked absent for the whole of the session.

### LATENESS

Any pupil arriving after 9.00am should report to the school office and provide a reason for their lateness. Children arriving after 9.30am will be formally classed on their attendance as an unauthorized late. This will show as an absence for the morning session.

### FOLLOWING UP LATENESS

Parents/carers whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by a member of school staff who will work with them to bring about an improvement in punctuality. Strategies such as individual star charts may be used. If late arrivals are due to circumstances outside the pupil's control, e.g. delayed public transport etc, the late mark will be authorised.

### ABSENCES

Notification must be provided for all absences from school. Notification can only be provided by the parent or carer. Parents should telephone the school office on the each day of absence. Absences are authorised by the Executive Headteacher, or Head of School within the school. School may decide not to authorise absence, even when a reason is provided. The school will usually authorise absence for illness, funeral, religious occasion, moving house, music or dance exams. The school will not authorise absence for occasions such as shopping, birthdays, looking after siblings/parents etc or any holidays in term time.

### LEAVING AND RETURNING TO SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL DAY

When pupils leave from or return to school during the school day, they must be signed in and out at the school office. This will ensure an up to date attendance record can be printed out in the event of a fire.

### TERM TIME HOLIDAYS

Martins Wood School strongly discourages parents from taking family holidays during term time so no holidays will be authorised. It is a Local Authority Policy that states that parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a holiday. Forms requesting authorisation for absence in term-time are available from the school office.

### FOLLOWING UP ABSENCES

The Attendance Lead monitors attendance records on a weekly basis. The school will send out letters to parents of pupils whose attendance drops below 93%. If attendance drop further, below 85%, parents will be invited in to a meeting with the Attendance Lead. This is to try to reduce the risk of persistent absenteeism.

Prolonged or regular absence is addressed initially through a letter, followed by a meeting with the Attendance Lead/involvement of the Local Authority Attendance Officer if the absence persists. The Local Authority Attendance Officer can become involved in cases of 90% or less attendance.

The school office are responsible for recording absences and completing/sending off paperwork in relation to any pupil exclusion. Pupils who are in hospital or recovering from an operation/illness, resulting in long term absence, will be supported by learning being sent home during their absence and an individually tailored reintegration on their return, e.g. slightly shorter day, later start etc. If a pupil is absent due to a holiday, the school will not provide learning.

A member of the office team will send a text message home on each day of absence if a reason is not given. This will be followed up, if necessary, by a text, one further text message, a phone call and a welfare check. Two members of staff will attend the welfare check, at least one of these members of staff will be a Designated Safeguarding Lead, the driver will have business insurance, no child will be transported in their vehicle. If the welfare check is unsuccessful the DSL will take further steps including contacting Social services or if necessary the Police.

If no valid reason is given then the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Absence due to illness is authorised, however, in the case of children with less than 90% attendance medical evidence may be requested in order to authorise an absence. Parents will be informed if the school chooses to record an absence as unauthorised due to doubts over the legitimacy of the illness.

#### REWARDS/PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

Outstanding attendance is rewarded for pupils and staff individually through certificates and prizes, presented in assembly at the end of each term. Each week in our Celebration Assembly there is a Class Attendance Cup for the class with the best attendance. Parents are reminded through newsletters about the importance of good attendance and termly statistics for attendance. In the

case of a parent being contacted regarding their child's attendance, support from the Attendance Lead is always offered. The ethos at Martins Wood School ensures that pupils feel valued, welcomed and excited to attend school.

#### WORKING WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITY ATTENDANCE OFFICER (LAAO)

Martins Wood School works in partnership with the allocated LAAO to improve attendance for individuals and the whole school. The Attendance Lead meets the LAAO, usually once a year, to inspect registers, discuss and monitor individual pupils. The school and LAAO work together to improve attendance, but when attendance does not improve sufficiently, a formal referral will be made to Children's Services. This may lead to home visits and sometimes prosecution. In-line with Hertfordshire County Council's policy, Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued to the parents of children who have 15 sessions of unauthorised absence within 2 consecutive terms. In these cases the County guidelines for Fixed Penalty Notices will be followed. Parents may request a copy of this guidance.

#### PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION

Parents, pupils, staff and governors are informed of whole school attendance issues and statistics on a regular basis through newsletters and termly reports. Martins Wood School shares information on individual pupils' attendance termly with parents at parent consultation evenings, and at any other necessary times with parents, pupils and staff. New parents are informed of our ethos and policy for attendance and punctuality through tours of the school. For parents whom English is not their first language, we will provide translation of our newsletter and policies through the Local Authority ethnic minority service. The school office are responsible for ensuring that termly attendance data is provided to the DfE.

#### **Further Resources - Statutory guidance**

- [School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures](#)
- [Children missing education](#)
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education](#)
- [School exclusion](#)
- [National statistics: Pupil absence in schools in England](#)