



# Marshlands School

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## Statement of intent

Marshlands School believes 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.

Marshlands School is committed to:

- Following 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:

Headteacher

Date: 01/05/2018

Chair of governors

Date: 01/05/2018

## **1. Legal framework**

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

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)

1.2. This policy also has regard to non-statutory DfE guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2016) 'School attendance'
- Staffordshire Local Authority Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices (01/01/2018)

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

2.1. The governing body has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures of Marshlands School.

2.2. The governing body has overall responsibility for 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.

2.3. The governing body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's complaints policy.

2.4. The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy and procedures of the school.

2.5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for following the Attendance Policy and for ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

2.6. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.

2.7. Parents/carers are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.

2.8. Parents/carers are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.

### 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/carers 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.
  - Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
  - Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
  - Leaving school for no reason during the day.
  
- **“Persistent absenteeism”** as:
  - Missing 15 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.
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their new starter 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 the beginning of each school year, to agree to keep their attendance at, or above, 92 percent throughout the year.

## **6. Absence procedures**

- 6.1. Parents/carers are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence.
- 6.2. A phone call will be made to the parent/carer of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
- 6.3. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance intervention officer.
- 6.4. If a pupil's absence drops below 85 percent, the education welfare officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the parents/carers.

## **7. Contact information**

- 7.1. Parents/carers are responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- 7.2. Parents/carers are responsible for updating the school if the details change.

## **8. Attendance intervention officer**

- 8.1. If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the attendance intervention officer who will attempt to resolve the situation by agreement.
- 8.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the attendance intervention officer will notify the education welfare officer who has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.

## **9. Lateness**

- 9.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 9.2. The school day starts at 9:00am. Pupils should be in school for assembly at this time.
- 9.3. Registers are marked by 9:30am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

9.4. The register closes at 9:40am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.

9.5. After lunch, registers are marked by 1:10pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

9.6. The register closes at 1:20pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

9.7. Pupils attending after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but this will count as a late mark.

## **10. Term-time leave**

10.1. At Marshlands School, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents/carers to observe the school holidays as prescribed.

10.2. The headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.

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

10.4. The headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher.

10.5. 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.

10.6. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- 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

10.7. If parents/carers take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

## **11. Missing children**

11.1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from a member of the senior leadership team.

11.2. 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 senior leadership team 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 senior leadership team.
  - The following areas will be systematically searched:
    - All classrooms
    - All toilets
    - The library
    - Any 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, then the parents/carers of the pupil will be notified.
  - If the parents/carers have had no contact from the pupil, then 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.
- 11.3. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked after child, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- 11.4. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- 11.5. The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- 11.6. Parents/carers and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
- 11.7. The headteacher will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- 11.8. Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy.
- 11.9. A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

## **12. Religious observances**

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

## **13. Appointments**

- 13.1. As far as possible, parents/carers will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 13.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.
- 13.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent/carer.
- 13.4. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

## **14. Monitoring and review**

- 14.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 14.2. Marshlands School's attendance target is 92 percent.
- 14.3. This policy is reviewed every three years by the headteacher; the next scheduled review date for this policy is March 2020.
- 14.4. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents/carers.

## Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Marshlands School has 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. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers and pupils record their attendance in their planners. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
2. Contact is made with parents/carers on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and attendance intervention officer daily.
3. Contact is made to the parents/carers of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
4. If a pupil's attendance falls to 92 percent, the attendance intervention officer makes a phone call home to discuss this with parents/carers.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls below 92 percent, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below 85 percent, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the attendance intervention officer contacts the parents to discuss this.
7. The pupil's attendance is monitored for two weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents/carers are required to attend a meeting in school with the attendance intervention officer and set targets for their child. If parents/carers are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO), who will then conduct a home visit.
8. After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the pupil and their parents/carers on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 92 percent.
9. If targets are not met, the attendance intervention officer makes a referral to the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents/carers. If there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed penalty notice is issued.