

Mehria Primary School



MEHRIA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Date agreed: April 2024

Review date: April 2026

Signed: _____

Headteacher

Signed: _____

Deputy Headteacher

Mehria Primary School

Attendance Policy

SECTION 1 – POLICY

The law states that a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where he, or she, is a registered pupil.

What is attendance?

We aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time wherever possible to ensure that they are able to make the most of the educational experiences offered. We also aim to raise awareness of the importance of attendance with children's families.

Why is attendance at school important?

'The future for young people is changing rapidly. The nature of employment is being transformed by the implementation of new technology and global economic factors. Young people need to achieve higher educational levels than at any time in the past. Non-attendance at school, even for short periods, may jeopardise their future opportunities by limiting their educational experience'.

How we achieve improvement

We aim to improve the levels of attendance through continuing to:

- promote a safe, caring and supporting school ethos
- provide a clean, attractive and pleasant physical environment
- promote a positive attitude towards school
- seek to enable all pupils to feel happy and secure
- deal with any difficulties experienced by pupils in a positive manner and in line with our approach to pastoral care
- seek to improve parental involvement
- monitor attendance regularly

We will use a variety of strategies which seek to raise levels of attendance and punctuality. These will include rewards for outstanding and/or improved attendance.

Target Setting

In consultation with our Proprietor and Governing Body, the school will adopt a target figure for attendance each year. The overall school target will not be lower than a minimum 95% attendance.

Equal Opportunities and Attendance

In circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend school help can be given in relation to catching up with work missed. However, as children learn through practical and 'hands-on' approaches, they need to be present in school to make the most of teaching and learning.

We can offer:

- for long absences, providing reading books and writing book to take away, and recommending workbooks to support English and Maths.

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- teaching assistants and support staff providing individual attention where appropriate
- personal attention and encouragement from class teachers and other specified staff
- differentiation of tasks to best suit the needs of the individual pupil
- use of Family Workers to support the family

SECTION 2 – ATTENDANCE GUIDANCE

Parents' and Carers' Responsibilities

- Parents are by law required to make sure that their children who are on the school register attend school regularly and punctually.
- Parents and Carers are responsible for letting the school know about any pupil absence on the first day of the absence.
- If their child is not in school for longer than necessary, then Parents and Carers should indicate when he/she is likely to return.

Parents and Carers can inform the school of their child's absence by any other following methods:

- Telephone
- Personal contact
- Letter signed by parent, even if written by another family member

School Procedures

The School uses attendance registers and electronic recording to store and monitor our legal responsibilities in relationship to attendance.

Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Registers are returned to the School Office after the closure of the registration period.

Absence

Parents and Carers can be taken to court if they don't make sure their child attends school, without reason as defined in law and if the child has unauthorised absences.

It is the school's decision whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. A note or telephone message from a parent will not count as an authorised absence if the reasons given are not acceptable to the school.

If any children are repeatedly absent from school without any communication from the parent, it is our policy to:

- Follow up with phone call, or if we have concerns that the child might be truanting.
- If there is no response, then to send a letter to the parent with a reply slip to enquire as to the reason for the absence.

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The following table shows examples of authorised and unauthorised absences:



Examples of Authorised Absence	Examples of Unauthorised Absence
Illness, medical or dental appointment. Provided the school is satisfied the illness and appointments are genuine	Where pupil misses registration and is unable to give an acceptable reason
Special occasions as agreed with the school as an authorised absence *	Additional days taken for special occasions or days other than those specified by the school
An agreed period for family bereavement *	Shopping during school hours
Religious observance days, the number and timing of each will be determined by the school, e.g. two days for each Eid festival ^	Going to the airport to meet or say goodbye to relatives
Term time leave, as agreed by the school in accordance with the guidance given in this document *	Looking after brothers or sisters
	Absence for more than the agreed period.
	Additional days taken other than those specified by the school
	Term time leave without prior authorisation by the school
	Several medical related absences unsupported by medical note and where attendance is below 87%

* Authorised leave of absence for these situations may be considered by the Headteacher. Refer to '**Leave of Absence during term time**' sections for guidance on school policy.

^ The Governing body has decided that only religious festival days will be agreed (e.g. one day for each Eid festival) within a total of 2 days during the whole school year.

Lateness

- Pupils arriving after 9.05 am, will be recorded as late
- Pupils arriving after 9.05 am must report to the School Office so that their attendance can be recorded.
- Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be recorded 'Unauthorised Late'. This will be considered an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory reason is given, for example a medical appointment. Lateness is monitored.
- Action to address lateness will be taken in line with the school's strategy to improve punctuality.
 - Send letter to parent with a reply slip to enquire as to the reason for the lateness
 - Follow up with phone call if there is no response
 - Make a home visit via the Family Workers or Education Welfare Officer

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- We expect parents and carers to collect their children promptly at the end of the school day as it is upsetting for children if they do not. Children who are not collected within 10 minutes of the end of the school day are brought to the school office and their names are recorded. The same procedures for late arrival are followed.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

All schools are required by law to keep an attendance register and to mark any absence as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. We must publish our attendance figures twice a year. A child's attendance record is printed on their school report and in this way is reported to Parents and Carers. Children's attendance records are also carried with them to their next class or school.

Leave of Absence during term time

Children are expected to attend school for 190 days per year. However, the law gives discretionary power for schools to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family trip or visit abroad during term time. Our policy is detailed below:

- Parents and Carers must make an application for leave of absence (Appendix A) during term time before any tickets are booked.
- Only in certain circumstances will leave be granted
- No child may have more than 2 periods of holiday authorised during their time at Mehria Primary School.
- The period of leave authorised will not extend beyond 10 school days
- No parent can demand Leave of Absence for the sole purpose of taking a holiday.
- In considering any application for leave during term time, we will take into account:
 - The child's previous attendance record; if this falls below 95% it is unlikely the request will be granted
 - National testing; Leave of Absence will not be authorised for pupils in Year 2 or Year 6 from January until the second half of the summer term, after the End of Key Stage 1 and 2 assessments are completed.
 - The timing in the school year. For example, no authorised holiday will be granted in the first two weeks of the school year.

Apply to the school for leave of absence by completing a school "Leave of Absence for Term Time Leave" form available in the school office or the school web site detailing the requested departure and return dates.

The law also allows authorised leave for special occasions, family bereavement, religious observances and off-site activities like music exams. All applications for these types of leave should be made, in writing, to the Headteacher.

Extended Trips Overseas

We are conscious that many of our school community have family abroad. We understand that these links should be maintained. However, our concern is that children taken out of school during term time lose significant educational opportunities. Therefore, only in exceptional circumstances will extended holiday leave be granted.

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What to do if you are intending to take an extended term time leave (more than 10 days)

- Consider the timing and the duration to try to minimise the education that your child will miss, link any term time holiday to a school holiday period.
- Apply to the school for leave of absence by completing a school "Leave of Absence for Term Time Leave" form available in the school office or the school web site detailing the requested departure and return dates.
- You will be required to discuss the application with a member of the management team. Common reasons for refusal are:
 - A child is in Year 2 or 6 and the request is prior to the national SATs tests.
 - The child's attendance record is below 95%
 - The child has already had a period of extended absence from school
- If leave has been agreed, book tickets with the travel agent and bring the tickets to the school office for verification of return date.
- Once the dates have been seen to comply with the agreed dates, you will be given a letter which authorises the absence.

Possible consequences of your child having unauthorised absences

1. Please note that there is considerable pressure on places at the school, and we have waiting lists for places in year groups which are full. If parents take their child out of school for an unauthorised leave of absence, this will be picked up by the School.
2. School monitors all unauthorised absences, and may implement penalty notices to parents who do not ensure that their children attend school.
3. Additionally, when children go on extended unauthorised absences, they are removed from the school roll and Education Welfare Services will be informed.

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Request for leave of absence from school during term time

You are advised not to make any travel arrangements until your request has been considered.



At Mehria School, the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and these will have to be explained. There is no general right to authorise absence from school for a family holiday. If you take your child out of school without permission, the absence will be unauthorised and legal action will be considered.

Section A – to the Headteacher, I wish to apply for

Child's Name: _____ Class: _____

To be authorised as absent from school (please include dates and times):

From _____ to _____ (inclusive dates)

If your child has siblings that are also applying for leave of absence, please enter their name and class below:

Child's Name: _____ Class: _____

Child's Name: _____ Class: _____

Section B – Please explain why you are applying for authorised absence and the **circumstances** which make your **application exceptional**; and therefore the leave cannot be taken during the normal 13 weeks holiday your child normally has from school. If you are requesting authorisation to attend a specific event, please confirm the date of the event and explain your travel arrangements. If you require additional space, please continue on the next page.

Section C – I am the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides. The information that I have given on this form is correct.

Signature (parent/carer): _____ Date: _____

Section D – for school use only

Current attendance rate (must be 97%): _____

If the child has had previous term time leave, please state dates and number of days taken:

Tick as appropriate

- Request approved for _____ number of days from the dates and times

- A personal discussion with you is required. Please contact: _____

- Request not approved as the circumstances are not considered to constitute an exceptional reason and/or the impact of this absence will affect your child's educational progress.

PLEASE NOTE: This leave of absence form serves as a Penalty Notice Warning letter to parent/carers. Any unauthorised absence during this period of time may be subject to a penalty notice for non attendance being issued.

Headteacher: _____ Date: _____

If leave is to be authorised, the following must be completed

Travelling abroad? Yes / No Country _____ Return date: ____/____/____

Proof of return date (*tickets/e mail etc.*) _____

Continuation of Section B (if needed):

Empty box for continuation of Section B.