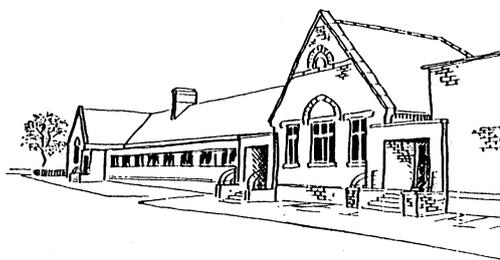


Mundella Primary School Policies

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Date Created/Updated: November 2017

Responsibility: SLT

Date to be reviewed: November 2020

The Law and Responsibilities of Sheffield LA

- All pupils of compulsory school age receive a suitable full time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise
- The Local Authority must provide school places to parents who wish their children to be educated at school
- The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session
- The school must report to the Local Authority pupils who fail to attend regularly or are absent for more than ten days without explanation
- The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities

Failure by parents to ensure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law.

Registers

Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning (8.50am) and afternoon (12.50/1.10pm) sessions. The register closes at 9.30am and is sent to the school office.

*Registers are a legal document. Great care must be taken to ensure registers are marked accurately on the paper copy and transferred onto SIMS. Attendance of all pupils is monitored and evaluated regularly.

Absence

Parents are requested to telephone school on the first day of absence to explain why their child is not at school. Each day, the WSA monitors the registers and highlights any child who requires a "First day" call. The appropriate symbol may then be entered in the school attendance record. If there is no answer to the call, a message is left and this is followed up on the next day. If no explanation for a short-term absence is received, a letter is sent to the parents asking for them to explain the absence. If no explanation is given, the absence

will be marked as unauthorised. Further attempts to contact will be made. Extended absence without contact will result in a referral to CME

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. School reserves the right to request evidence of appointments.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Absence may be authorised if:

- The pupil is too ill to attend school
- The pupil is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause i.e. Emergency medical/dental appointments
- The pupil is absent on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carer belongs (2 days maximum per year).
- The school at which the pupil is registered is not within walking distance and no suitable arrangements have been made by the Local Authority *unless the parents/carers have chosen to send their child to a school which is not within walking distance*
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return
- There is a close family bereavement
- The pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has granted leave of absence
- Leave of absence where permission has been sought and where the Headteacher has agreed that there are exceptional circumstances but not in the first 2 weeks of the school year or during SATs. The leave of absence will not be authorised where the pupil's attendance is below 90%.
- The Headteacher feels the request for absence is unavoidable or adds value to the child's education.

*Absence passes are available from the school office and should be carried on unavoidable medical/dental/examination appointments.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Absence should not be authorised if:

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The school is not satisfied with an explanation offered
- The pupil is staying home to look after parents, siblings or the home
- The pupil is absent on special occasions e.g. birthday
- The pupil is absent on a family holiday for longer than agreed by the Head Teacher
- The pupil is absent on a family holiday not agreed by the Head Teacher
- The pupil is absent unnecessarily e.g. taken shopping, for a haircut
- The pupil is a persistent absentee (where absence is below 90%), the parent has been notified that they need to provide medical evidence for future absences and has failed to do so.

Responding to lateness/absence

- Mundella operate an 'In the line for 10-2-9' policy. Pupils arriving late once the gates are locked will come through the main office. They will be marked as late in the register.
- Parents should inform the Office or leave a message on the school ansaphone giving the reason why their child is absent from school. If no notification has been received by 9.30 am the Office will contact the parent to ascertain the reason for the absence. The Office will only contact the parent on the first day of absence due to illness - any subsequent days will be assumed to be a continuation of the illness. If the illness lasts for more than 3 days, then the parent should contact the office again to update them
- Any pupil arriving in school after 9.30 am will be marked 'U' - 'attended after registration closed'. In case of emergency during the school day, the register shows the pupil is on the premises, but they will not receive a present mark toward their overall attendance.
- Parents/carers will be contacted by school if their child is persistently late

Holidays/Leave of Absence

Parents/carers wishing to take a pupil out of school for a holiday should be actively discouraged. However, the Head Teacher **may** authorise if the request is deemed to be 'exceptional' circumstances.

- Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday in term time
- Parents are not entitled to remove children from school for holidays: leave of absence must be applied for and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances by the Headteacher.
- Each request for absence will be considered individually, taking account of the age of the child, the time of year proposed for the trip, the exceptional circumstances, the overall attendance pattern of the pupil and the child's stage of education and progress.
- If parents wish to request time out of school, they need to request a leave of absence form, which is available from the school office or can be downloaded from the

website. This form should be completed at least two weeks before the proposed absence. It is important to note that a letter from a parent does not authorise an absence, only the school's acceptance of the explanation offered by the letter can authorise the absence

- If parents take children out of school when this has not been authorised by the head teacher school could exercise its right to impose a fine or pursue court action in line with the local authority policy.

Please see Term Time Leave Policy for full details.

Holidays will not be authorised

- When the holiday is to be taken during the first two weeks in September
- During school examinations, testing weeks
- When a pupil's attendance is below 90%
- When a holiday, whether authorised or not, of 10 days or more has already been taken by the pupil during the academic year

If an unauthorised holiday is taken, consideration could be given to issuing a Penalty Notice. The MAST Team will, after consulting with school, consider each case taking into consideration any mitigating circumstances and make a decision. The Local Authority will inform the school of the outcome and carry out any necessary action.

Attendance monitoring Procedures

The WSA and Learning Mentor monitor the registers on a daily basis.

Whole school attendance is monitored twice half-termly by the Learning Mentor and a member of SLT to identify any children whose attendance is below 90% or is in danger of dropping below 90%.

If a pattern of poor attendance is formed:

- Parents will receive a record of attendance and letter from the Headteacher
- The Learning Mentor may do a home visit when a child does not attend without communication for an extended period. She may also collect children from their homes to enable attendance when required
- Children with concerning attendance are monitored for improvement. If no improvement is seen/worsens, the parent/carer is invited to discuss this further with the Learning Mentor. School Nurse/Governor for Attendance/Head teacher could also be included in the discussion.
- Persistent absence will be discussed with the local authority. If advised a referral can be made to the MAST team who will meet with parents, discuss, and agree strategies for improved attendance. The Learning Mentor may attend this meeting.
- Where attendance falls into the persistent absence category (i.e less than 90%) medical evidence could be requested for all future absences whilst the child remains in this category, failure to provide such evidence could result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

- Further discussion with the Local Authority representative for attendance can be offered to support parents in addition to a referral to MAST for practical support and guidance.
- And parents do not engage with school to improve attendance, school could exercise its right to impose a fine or pursue court action in line with the local authority policy.

Persistent Absence

When an absence falls below 90%, a child is classed as a 'Persistent Absentee'. Children who fall in to this category will be monitored by school in conjunction with the Local Authority.

Parents should:

- Ensure their child attends regularly and on time
- Notify school on the first day of absence
- Only request a holiday in term time in exceptional circumstances
- Not keep their children away from school for trivial reasons
- Accept the obligations contained in the Home/School Agreement
- Make dental, medical, non-urgent appointments out of school hours if possible

School should:

- Ensure a senior member of staff is responsible for attendance matters
- Have an expectation that full time, punctual attendance will be the norm and all absences will be followed up
- Monitor attendance through checking registers and parental notes
- Have a system of pupil passes for legitimate time out of school due to unavoidable appointments
- Have a practice of reporting to governors on attendance matters
- Have an emphasis on the importance of regular school attendance in the Home/School agreement (in place since September 1999)
- Identify and act upon problems with attendance
- Reward children with excellent attendance each term with a certificate.
- Reward classes achieving 100% attendance for the week with a treat. E.g. chocolate biscuits
- Each week, in assembly, the KS1 and KS2 class with the highest attendance are announced and are identified in the 'Gold Award' book.

Children Missing from Education

If a child was missing from school for a week, we had had no notification as to where they were and any attempts to contact them had been unsuccessful they will be considered missing. If after 10 days and following contact to all known contact numbers / home visits/letter to known address etc. there had been no contact the Children Missing from Education Team, will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures (*see policy Children Missing from Education*)