

Attendance Policy

'Together we unlock potential and learn for life'



This policy was approved by the Governing Body of Moor First School at their meeting on:

SignedChair of Governors

SignedHeadteacher

Review Frequency: Every 3 years
2026

Next Review: May

Key Principles

- At Moor First School we believe that excellent school attendance is key to our children receiving the best education possible enabling them to reach their full potential and become successful lifelong learners.
- Promoting positive behaviour along with excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. This is embedded within our whole school values and curriculum.
- All pupils should be in school, on time, every day that the school is open for teaching, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.
- Pupils can, at times, be reluctant to attend school for various reasons. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carer. It also gives the pupil the impression that attendance and education are not important.
- This Policy should not be seen in isolation, but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the well-being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, and support for children with medical needs.

School Responsibilities

- We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. We will recognise good attendance appropriately.
- We will build and maintain positive relationships between home and school which will be the foundation of good attendance. Working in partnership is always the best approach.
- We will work with parents/carers to ensure they are aware of attendance matters and if needed, work with them to achieve good attendance and punctuality.
- We will support parents/carers and pupils to address and barriers affecting both behaviour and attendance, in and out of school.
- We will work in partnership with external agencies to help resolve any attendance problems. Agencies such as representatives of the Local Support Team and Education Welfare Workers, this is to ensure all pupils can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. If we deem it appropriate, we may also use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.
- We will proactively encourage good attendance for all pupils by ensuring all parents/carers receive information on the importance of this. If an individual's attendance becomes a concern, we will react quickly to support and improve this.
- We will intensify support where absences do not improve or earlier support is not engaged with.

Parents/Carers Responsibilities

- All parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child/ren of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- School should be informed as soon as possible if a child is not able to attend. A reason for the absence will also be required e.g sickness bug.
- Try to avoid making medical, dental or other appointments within school time.
- If you have no other choice but to have the above appointments during school hours, please provide school with evidence, such as, a GP/medical/dental appointment card.
- Ensure school are aware of any reasons inside or outside of school that may affect a child your child/ren attendance. Working with the school and/or the local authority will help understanding of any barriers to your child/ren attendance.

- Proactively engage in the support offered by school. This will prevent any further formal support or action needing to be carried out.
- If it is the case that further formal support is required, proactively engage with this. Agreeing with an 'Attendance Contract' or voluntary 'Early Help' to prevent any legal intervention.
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle.
- Have conversations with your child about school and communicate with school if your child has any worries or concerns, e.g. difficulties with home learning, mental health or friendships.
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. Any period must be requested by a parent/carer and by completing a 'Request of Leave' form, which must then be authorised by the Headteacher prior to taking leave.
- Seek medical advice if you aren't sure how long your child needs to be off for with an illness.
- Ensure school has all your contact details up to date, including GP details.
- Always encourage your child/ren to enjoy school and make the most of all opportunities they're presented with.

Admissions and Attendance Register

School keeps an admission register, which contains the personal details of every pupil in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, including those of their parents/carers and of their previous school. All schools (including academies) must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least 6 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulation 2024.

Registration

Our school doors open at 08:40am, registers are taken at 08:45am.
School closes at 03:15pm.

Schools, by law, are required to take an attendance register twice daily to show if a pupil is present or absent. They could be in an approved educational-related activity outside of the school grounds or unable to attend due to an authorised exceptional circumstance, as previously mentioned.

School must record whether the absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence: are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason e.g. illness, evidenced medical appointment or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absence: are mornings or afternoons away from school in which the school does not find reasonable and hasn't been agreed to as an 'exceptional circumstance.' Examples of such are:

- Parents/carers keeping their child/ren off school unnecessarily
- No evidence provided for the absence when requested
- Holidays taken within term time that have not been authorised by the Headteacher or the period of absence taken exceeds the agreed time.
- Truancy before or during school time.
- Absences that have not been adequately explained.
- Arrival after registration has closed or persistent lateness.

If a pupil is absent, every half-day (classed as 1 session) absence from school must be classified and coded by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents/carers. Therefore, information regarding the reason for absence for each day's absence is always required. There is no requirement for schools to record whether absence of pupils not of compulsory school age is authorised or not.

Parents/carers whose children are experiencing difficulties either in school or out of school should contact the school at an early stage, asking for an appointment with the Headteacher, Mrs Atherton. Parents should work together with staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful and school values partnership working with parents and other agencies.

When completing the register, which is completed at the start of the school day and once in the afternoon, school follows DfE attendance guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' to determine which code to use.

Morning registration is taken at 08:45am. Pupils who arrive after that time but before 09:10am are recorded as L – for late. If a pupil arrives after 09:10am, with no valid or approved reason, they will be recorded as U – for unauthorised absence.

Afternoon registration is taken at 01:00pm. Pupils who arrive after that time but before 01:20pm are recorded as L – for late. If a pupil arrives after this time, with no valid or approved reason, they will be recorded as U – for unauthorised absence.

Late Procedures

If a parent/carer is aware that they are going to be late and have a valid reason then we ask that they follow the procedure below:

- Ring the school office (as soon as possible) so that class teachers can be informed and prepare for the late arrival of the child. If there is no answer, please leave a voicemail. Alternatively send an email to the office email address.
- Parents/carers and pupils who arrive late should come to the school office to register and Miss Derricott, office secretary, will add them to the 'Late Registration' log book.

If lateness becomes a cause for concern then the following procedures will be followed:

- Parents/carers will receive a phone call from the Headteacher, Mrs Atherton.
- If an explanation isn't valid, parents/carers will receive a letter from the school detailing their concern and support will be offered.
- If no improvements seen, parents/carers may receive another letter advising that the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) may contact parents further discuss and offer support and advice to improve punctuality.
- If still no improvement, Parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting with the EWO and Home-School-Links Worker to discuss reasons for lateness to offer support. Referrals to wider support services and signposting may be offered. The discussion held will be documented by the EWO and an action plan to improve school attendance will be devised with parents/carers and pupils where appropriate during the meeting and a review date set if needed.
- If no improvement is seen after the meeting has taken place, the school may follow Staffordshire Local Authority Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices:

Attendance categories

The following attendance categories are used to track each pupil's attendance. Each pupil's individual attendance is tracked on regular basis. Parents/Carers receive a letter indicating their child's attendance for each half term and how this compares to the 'Attendance Categories'. See below Attendance colour codes:

Biddulph Trust	DfE Absence Bandings
<p align="center">95% - 100% Well Done! This is excellent!</p> <p>If you are in the Green group you have been absent for less than two weeks in the whole year or you may have attended school every day.</p>	<p align="center">Absence from 0% to less than 5%</p>
<p align="center">90.1% - 94.9% Be Careful!</p> <p>If you are in the Yellow group, you could be missing more than 2 weeks of learning.</p>	<p align="center">Absence from 5% to less than 10%</p>
<p align="center">90% and below = PERSISTANT ABSENCE BAND</p> <p>If you are in the red group, you are now classed as <u>persistently absent</u> and could be missing just under 4 weeks of learning.</p>	<p align="center">Persistently absent DfE Banding</p>
<p align="center">79.9% - 50.9% = At risk of Severe Absence</p> <p>If you are in the red group and fall within this band, you could be missing between 7 to 19 weeks of learning</p>	<p align="center">Persistently absent DfE Banding</p>
<p align="center">50% and below = SEVERVE ABSENCE</p> <p>You are now a Severe Absence Pupil and are missing more than 19 weeks of learning in the school year.</p>	<p align="center">Severely absent DfE Banding</p>

Low Attendance

If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% (persistent absence) the procedures listed below will be followed. It is to be noted that the following attendance categories are used to identify poor attendance within the RED Persistent Absence band:

- 90% and below – Persistent Absence (National Guidance)
- 79.9% - 50.9% - At risk of Severe Absence (LA Guidance)
- 50% and below – Severe Absence (National Guidance)

If Persistent and/or Severe absence is the case, the following procedures will be followed:

- Parents/Carers receive a phone call from the schools Headteacher Mrs Atherton.
- Parents/carers will receive a letter informing of the concern. The Headteacher may contact parents/carers to discuss any support that may be required.
- The school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will contact Parents/Carers if no improvements in attendance seen to offer advice and support to improve attendance and make Parents/Carers aware of attendance clinic invite.
- Parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting with the EWO to discuss reasons for poor attendance and to offer support. Referrals to wider support services and signposting may be offered. The discussion held will be documented by the EWO and an action plan to improve school attendance will be devised with parents/carers. Parents/carers will be made aware of the legal implications.
- If no improvement is seen after the meeting has taken place, the school may follow Staffordshire Local Authority Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices – link on previous page.
- If no further improvement seen Parents/Carers will be invited to attend a follow up meeting with the EWO to discuss reasons for lack of engagement or support not working. More formal conversation held to be clear about the potential need for legal intervention.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, school will work with the Local Authority on Legal Intervention.

Reporting Absence

Parents/Carers whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school office or Headteacher at an early stage to try and work together to resolve any issues or receive sign posting to support. Alternatively, Parents/Carers may wish to contact the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) themselves, obtaining their details through school, to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice.

If a child is absent from school we ask that the following procedures are followed:

Absence known in advance (e.g. Medical Appointment)

A copy of the medical/hospital appointment letter or Doctor's appointment card should be given to the school office, informing the school and class teacher of the nature of the absence (reason why) and when it will be or has been taken. This will be added to the pupil's file and electronic system for monitoring attendance. If no proof has been received for your child's appointment, the session may be recorded as unauthorised until proof is seen.

Absence not known in advance

- Ring, leave a voicemail or email the school (*before 9:15am where possible*) on the first day of absence in order to inform the school and provide a reason.
- Inform school of the reason for absence on each day of your child's absence. If your child has been physically sick and needs to follow the 48 hour rule, we would not expect you to call the next day.
- Reply promptly to any request or inquiry concerning absence.

If a child is absent without explanation then the following procedures will be followed:

- If by 9:30am we have not received an explanation for absence – School office staff will contact the Parents/Carers by phone call or text message. Family members will also be contacted where necessary.
- This will enable us to ensure that the Parent/Carer was aware of their child's absence from school enabling the Parent/Carer where necessary to establish their child is safe.

- This will also determine the reason for absence and when the pupil might be expected to return to school.
- School office staff will then enter the correct code into the school register and relay any messages to the appropriate members of staff.
- If a reason is still not known after 5 school days, the absence will be unauthorised.

Children Missing in Education

Schools have a duty by law to refer any absence of 20 days or more to the Local Authority Children Missing in Education department where they have been unable to establish contact with the Parent/Carer/Pupil or have general concerns about the absence. To avoid any referrals, Parents/Carers are requested to inform the school if they are moving house/area or country and to provide a forwarding address, contact number and the name of the new school if known.

Truancy

All staff at Moor First School are responsible for promoting regular attendance and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They also strive to ensure that every learner's safety, welfare and happiness is at the heart of all decision making. Although it is a very rare occurrence for a pupil to truant, if there is a concern that a pupil might be truanting then the following action is taken immediately:

- Notify the Headteacher.
- Headteacher then contacts the parents either by phone or by home visit.
- This is then followed up by notifying the Educational Welfare Officer of the situation.
- The Headteacher, Parents and Pupil concerned meet to discuss any reasons for them not wanting to attend school in an effort to resolve any issues and put relevant support into place.
- Actions decided are shared with all relevant personnel and put into place.

Medical Absence

Schools have the responsibility to decide whether an absence can be authorised on medical grounds. If the school has concerns about the level of medical absence that a pupil has incurred, they will contact the Parent/Carers to discuss it further and to find out whether their GP or other health professionals have been contacted. Miss Derricott, school secretary, will communicate with Parents/Carers to review any Care Plans and signpost to relevant support. Parents/Carers may be asked to provide evidence that their child is too unwell to attend school by providing a copy of any prescribed medication or medical appointments/communication. Health /NHS Hub may be contacted for advice or support if the illness or medical condition is considered to be long-term. If the school do not receive medical evidence, the absences will be unauthorised.

Medical and Dental Appointments

We expect Parents/Carers to make every effort to make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during the school holidays. If this is not possible, confirmation of the appointment will be required prior to authorising the absence and an **M** code used on the register to record when the child has attended an appointment. Pupils are expected to attend school prior to the appointment and Parents/Carers are expected to return their children to school following the appointment unless not well enough to do so.

Monitoring and Tracking of School Attendance

At Moor First School we view excellent attendance as a vital component in helping our learning community to achieve both academically and pastorally. As a result, we regularly track monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify individuals, cohorts or groups that require support with their attendance and to inform strategic decision making around attendance across the school. The following tracking, analysis and monitoring is undertaken:

- The Headteacher liaises with office staff to monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends to inform early intervention for individuals, families, groups and cohorts.
- Key action points or proposed interventions shared with Class Teachers weekly via briefing notes.
- Half Termly benchmarking undertaken against National Attendance Data at whole school, year group and cohort level. Outcomes used to inform strategic action planning and feedback to Stakeholders.
- Half termly, termly and full year analysis of attendance data is undertaken by members of the Senior Leadership Team/DSL/DDSL to identify trends and patterns. This includes analysis of pupils and cohorts and use of certain codes. All data gained is used to inform strategic decision making and specific strategies to address any areas of poor attendance or to celebrate attendance achievements.
- Senior leaders and Governors monitor the impact of actions taken and use information gained to inform future strategic planning around attendance. Attendance data and reports are shared with the Governing Body on a termly basis to monitor and measure impact at a strategic level.

The school receives 'Targeted Support Meetings' from the Local Authority. These take the form of regular conversations with school using the attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance or any targeted actions or support required.

The Local Authority also provides the school with communication and advice, multi-disciplinary support for families and legal intervention when required. The Local Authority has the responsibility to track local attendance data and monitor and improve attendance.

Our Education Welfare Officer meets with the Headteacher to monitor and review pupil's attendance. Where there appears to be a particular problem or barrier identified then the following procedures are applied:

- Communication to home to identify any challenges or barriers and to offer and signpost to support.
- Letters sent to Parents and Carers informing them of a decline in school attendance and the need for this to improve due to the impact on their child's education.
- If school attendance continues to decline, further communication is made with Parents and Carers via letter and or phone call by the Headteacher and /or the Education Welfare Officer
- If no improvement seen, parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer to discuss concerns and to offer support around any possible barriers or challenges at home or in school which may be contributing to low attendance. Referrals to wider support may be offered where appropriate. The discussion held will be documented by the EWO and an action plan to improve school attendance will be devised during the meeting with a review date set if needed.
- If school attendance does not improve, the school may follow the Local Authorities Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for pupils with persistent absence.
- More formal action may be undertaken if deemed appropriate by professional agencies involved.

Targets

The following targets have been agreed by the Governing Body for the academic year.

- **School absence target for 2024-2025 = 4%**
- **School attendance target for 2024-2025 = 96%**
- **Biddulph Partnership of Schools agreed target = 96.5%**

Communication

Key information regarding lateness, illness and absence is available to parents through the weekly newsletter and provided through texts messages and social media accounts linked to the school. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and in Parents/Carers notifying the school if their child/children are absent for any reason. Parents and Carers are encouraged to share any worries their child might have in school and to work in partnership with the school to address any issues or concerns.

Attendance Initiatives and Celebrating Good Attendance

At Moor First we believe that attendance is an important factor in the success of a child's education. In order to ensure consistency and progression in their learning development it is vital that pupils not only attend on a daily basis but also arrive and leave school on time. It is equally important however, that pupils should not be in school if they are unwell and unable to cope with the daily learning. The school has adopted the following attendance initiatives in order to help further improve our attendance targets.

Celebrating Weekly Attendance

- A weekly overview is made of each class and their percentage of attendance. The class with the highest attendance gets to have an extra 10 minutes of free play, at a suitable time, as to not disrupt learning.
- They will receive a special mention in our weekly celebration assembly.
- The class data is then shared on our weekly newsletter.

Celebrating Half Termly/Termly Attendance

- At the end of each half term the children with the 100% or the highest attendance will receive a certificate.

Celebrating Yearly Attendance

- Every learner who achieves 100% attendance for the academic year will receive a special attendance medal which is awarded at the end of year Awards Assembly.

Requests for 'Leave of Absence' from school

All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and schools maintained by a local authority must do so. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

(see Working together to improve school attendance 19th August 2024 for further information)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance__applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

Moor First School follow Staffordshire's Local Authority Protocol and agreed Biddulph Schools Partnership Trust policy in relation to requests for 'Leave of Absence' from school during term time. Moor First School does not promote leave of absence in term time, however, if a parent feels leave of absence has a justifiable circumstance they are asked to submit a leave of absence form which can be requested via the school office.

Headteachers may NOT grant any leave of absence during term time unless they meet the above approved criteria set out in regulation 11 or are exceptional circumstances, in which the Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is

granted. The fact that a holiday may be cheaper during term time will not be considered as exceptional circumstances.

Each request will be considered individually and on its own merits. Requests will need to be made in writing at least 14 days before the absence is to be taken if approved. In considering a request, the school will take account of the following:-

- The exceptional circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
- The stage of the child's education and progress and the effects the requested absence could have on these.
- The overall attendance pattern of the child
- The frequency of similar requests
- Whether the request was made giving the 14 days' notice in advance
- Whether the absence will be during examination or assessment times

If parents proceed to take their child out of school for a family holiday without the Headteacher's permission, all of the absences during this period will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. Parents/Carers should be mindful that this will affect the child's attendance record. A Penalty Notice can be issued if any period of absence is taken without the Headteacher's authorisation. Where a child does not reside with both parents, it is the responsibility of the parent making the request to inform the other parent. If a request for leave has not been received and we have reason to believe a pupil is on holiday, a letter will be sent to Parents/Carers requesting evidence to verify reason for absence other than a holiday. If no evidence can be provided, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised and a penalty notice request sent to the Local Authority.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued

Parents/Carers have the legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, on time, properly dressed and with the correct equipment ready to learn. Parents/carers may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This is in accordance with the 1996 Education Act, Section 443, 444(1), 444(1A). It aims to ensure that Parents/Carers carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their child/children.

Penalty Notices are issued to Parents and Carers as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided.

National Threshold for Issuing Penalty Notices

The new National Threshold for issuing penalty notices has been set at 10 sessions (5 days of school) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Please note that if the Local Authority believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, one can be issued for less than 5 days and before the threshold is met. E.g. If Parents and Carers are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below the threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events. As a school we will be expected to notify the County Council of all unauthorised leave in term time that meets the threshold of 5 days or less if appropriate.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of the following criteria is met:

- There is unauthorised persistent absence. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence over a period of ten school weeks, excluding holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive and the absence can span different terms or school years.

- There is a period of absence not authorised by the head teacher or in excess of the period authorised by the head teacher. (e.g. family holiday)
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. “Persistent” means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 10 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child’s first five days of exclusion. An “excluded child” is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

(Please note a session is the equivalent to half a day in school)

Other conditions.

New two penalty notice limit in a three-year period:

- The three-year rolling period starts for Parents/Carers when the first penalty notice is issued after the 19th August 2024.
- The **first penalty notice** for leave in term time issued will increase to £160 per parent/carer per child but can be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- If a **second penalty notice** is issued within three years of the first penalty notice, then this will be fixed at £160 per child per Parent/Carer with no reduction for an early payment.
- **A third penalty notice cannot be issued** within the three-year period; therefore, the County Council will **deal with any further unauthorised leave through prosecution in the Magistrates Court**. If a Parent/Carer is found guilty, the potential fine is up to £1,000.

Excluded Learners

A Penalty notice will be considered if the presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child’s first five days of exclusion. The parent of the excluded learner must ensure that the learner is not present in a public place at any time during school hours on a day that he / she is excluded, up to and including the first 5 days or, where that exclusion is for a fixed period of 5 days or less, any of the days to which the exclusion relates.

If the excluded learner is present in a public place at any time during school hours on a school day specified above the parent commits an offence under section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and is liable, on a summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

Elective Home Education

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child, school will contact the Parent/Carer to discuss their reasons in more detail, offering support to deal with any issues raised. If after this the Parent/Carer still wishes to home educate their child, the school will inform the Local Authority of the decision to remove the child’s name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record. Prior to deciding to home educate, parents/carers are requested to contact the Local Authority Elective Home Education Department.