

Marsh Baldon CE Primary School
The Green, Marsh Baldon
Oxford OX44 9LJ
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www.marshbaldonschool.co.uk

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Our Vision

'*I came to give life, life in all its fullness*' John 10:10

Introduction:
This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:
Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Children are best safeguarded from exploitation and other risks in the wider community by attending school regularly where they are supervised by qualified and caring professionals.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

This policy works to meet the mandatory requirements laid out in Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Promoting Regular Attendance:
Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:
- Give you details on attendance on our website and in our regular newsletter;
- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance;
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:
The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school hall.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 95% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Oxfordshire.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

We analyse all absence carefully and draw trends based on pupils' characteristics, vulnerabilities, days of the week, subjects missed and repeat illnesses. We focus our attention on addressing these trends of absence.

Understanding types of absence:
Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes. If this occurs, school will require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school late after the register has closed and are therefore given an unauthorised absence mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, never cover up their absence or give in to

pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bedtimes
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with the school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)

Exceptional Leave:
Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and the school may request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

1. It is widely known that the link between a pupil's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
2. Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school, further education and employment.
3. All schools in Oxfordshire are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising requests for holidays.
4. The Headteacher will meet personally with every family applying for Exceptional Leave to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance & attainment.
5. Exceptional leave is most unlikely to be authorised when a pupil's attendance is less than 96%.
6. Exceptional leave should always be refused when school is aware of any truancy.
7. Exceptional leave should always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
8. Reasons for Exceptional Leave should be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

The Penalty is £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, increasing to £160 if paid between day 21 and day 28. This amount is prescribed by the Education Penalty Notices (England) Regulations 2007. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice within the prescribed period may result in prosecution for the underlying offence of failure to secure regular school attendance.

Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period will be charged at a higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80. (The three-year period begins from the date of the first penalty notice issued on or after 19 August 2024)
Please note: Penalty Notices are issued per parent/per child.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence with the reason for the nonattendance.
- Or you can call into school and report to reception
- Be honest about the reason for absence including if you are on holiday

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Visit you at home if we have not heard from you by day 3 of absence;
- Follow School Attendance processes including inviting the parent/carer to a meeting in the school to identify the barriers to attendance and ensure support is put in place.
- Offer a Strengths and Needs form.
- Gain the voice of the child to ensure we are taking a child centred approach.
- Refer the matter to the County Attendance Team if attendance moves below 90%.

Contact details:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your current contact numbers and email addresses at all times. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number and email address – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on contact details throughout the year. Please ensure we have both parents and, where possible, at least a third emergency contact person's contact details.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage time keeping:

The school day starts at **8.40am** when the gates open. If your child arrives to school and registers as expected, they will receive a present mark **(/)**

Registers are marked at **8.50am** when the school gate closes. Your child will receive a late mark **(L)** if they are not in by that time.

At **9.20am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark **(U)** that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Whilst there is no mandatory time for **pm** registration, the school will seek to take the register directly following the lunchtime period at 1.15pm in order to support safeguarding and early identification of pupils who are Late to return or whom do not return. If your child is present for this registration they will be marked **(\ )**

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or

Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):
A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any child that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include allocation of additional support. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the County Attendance team. If your child becomes a PA pupil, we will seek your consent to complete a Strengths and Needs form with you and consider convening a Team Around the Family.

Severe Absenteeism (SA):
A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' when they miss 50% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing significant damage to any child's academic and social progress can have lifelong consequences. All SA pupils at our school will have an Individual Attendance Plan which will incorporate multi-agency input. You will be expected to engage with all partners to improve your child's attendance to 96+%. SA pupils are our highest priority at our school.

The County Attendance Team:
Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team at Oxfordshire County Council for consideration of legal proceedings.

At the school's request, they may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, or take action via a Non-Attendance referral, the legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

The County Attendance Team, with the school, will encourage you to engage with a Strengths and Needs form. Education Supervision Orders may be discussed with you to support rapidly improved attendance.

Parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, in the event of further unauthorised absences may receive summonses to Court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323513 attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:
Carolyn Hanwell, Head Teacher
Jess Mackay, School Business Manager
Janet Bufford, Safeguarding Governor with responsibility for attendance

Summary:
The school has a legal duty to report and publish its absence figures & its Attendance Policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to Oxfordshire County Council and the Department for Education. Our school is obliged to share all attendance data daily with Oxfordshire County Council and the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly and on time.

We have a lead Governor who scrutinises our attendance arrangements on behalf of all our pupils.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment, mental health and social well-being.

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the Attendance Policy at Marsh Baldon CE Primary School

Signed: Parent Name:

Child's Name:

Appendix 1

Wheatley Area Learning Partnership Attendance Statement

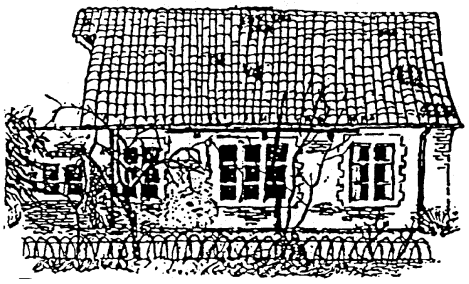
Being around teachers and friends in a school environment is the best way for pupils to learn and reach their potential. As a local partnership of schools, we are committed to working together on attendance as we firmly believe that being at school every day is a really important part of succeeding in education and in life. Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility and we collaborate closely as a partnership in promoting attendance and supporting families to identify and address challenges.

Attendance is important because:

1. All young people have the right to full time education. Schools have a legal duty to ensure that they take up this right.
2. Regular attendance and punctuality is absolutely key to pupil achievement. They cannot achieve if they are absent from school.
3. Poor attendance impacts children's mental health, including lower self-esteem and poorer social skills leading to pupils becoming isolated from their friends. This may result in unsettled behaviour, separation difficulties and increased anxiety. Increased anxiety about attending school can lead to additional stress for parents.
4. Positive attitudes towards attendance enable pupils to maximise their opportunities both in school and in later life.

Marsh Baldon CE Primary School is part of the Wheatley Area Learning Partnership. Other schools in the partnership are:
Wheatley Park School
Beckley Primary School
Garsington Primary School
Great Milton Primary School
Horspath Primary School
Ickford Primary School
John Watson School
Little Milton Primary School
Oakley Primary School
Sandhills Primary School
Wheatley Nursery School
Wheatley Primary School

Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time



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Dear Applicant,

All schools **by law** must follow the Department for Education's statutory guidance relating to school attendance. They must use the appropriate national attendance or absence code, and follow the criteria set out within the guidance. The statutory guidance states:

- A leave of absence **must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances and must be requested in advance**
- A leave of absence must be requested **in advance** by a parent who the pupil normally lives with
- Schools must judge **each application individually**, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request
- Where a leave of absence is granted, **the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school**
- **A need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance**
- A school **cannot** grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, the leave of absence should not be granted
- Where this guidance refers to a parent, the school and/or local authority will need to decide which adult(s) is most appropriate. Generally, parents include:
    - All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
    - All those who have parental responsibility
    - Those who have day to day responsibility for the child

Please note all schools are expected to regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence.

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to their educational progress. If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken, schools may refer to the Local Authority for legal action. Please find attached information regarding Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance.

Helping Parents understand Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

From 19 August 2024, there is a National Framework for Penalty Notice Fines being issued for unauthorised absences recorded by schools

National Threshold

A single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by ALL schools in England, this is:

- 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period
- These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence
- For example, a 5-day unauthorised leave of absence would meet the national threshold
- The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years

Who may be fined?

- Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent without authorisation from school
- For example, 3 siblings absent for unauthorised leave during term-time would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the fine amount will be:

- £80 per parent, per child if paid **within 21 days**
- If **not paid within 21 days**, the fine will increase to **£160 per parent, per child**, payable between the 22nd and 28th day

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be:

- £160 per parent, per child – payable within 28 days

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed, a Penalty Notice WILL NOT be issued, and the case will be presented **straight to the Magistrate's Court**

- **Prosecution** can result in **criminal records** and **fines of up to £2,500**
- Cases found **guilty** in a **Magistrates Court** can show on the parent's future DBS certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a **'failure to safeguard a child's education'**



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Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time

Dear Headteacher,

I would like to request permission for leave of absence for my child, a pupil registered at your school for the reasons detailed below *(further information can be attached if required).*

Pupil's name	
Pupil's Date of Birth	
Class	
Pupil address	

First date of absence and time	
Last date of absence	
Date of return to school	
Number of school days absent	

Please be aware, as per our school's Attendance Policy and the Oxfordshire's published Code of Conduct relating to school attendance, that the law requires parents to seek permission from the headteacher to take their child out of school during term time. The law states permission can only be granted if:

1. An application has been made in advance by the parent the child normally lives with; and
2. There are exceptional circumstances.

Please also note that, if on the rare occasion circumstances are deemed exceptional by the headteacher, the duration your child is permitted to be away from school may only be determined by the headteacher.

Reason for request including why you believe your circumstances to be exceptional (Further details may be attached to this form)

If you have a child/ren at another school/s, please detail their name/s and which school/s they attend below
Pupil's name, name of school and school telephone number:

Full name of person making request (note requests must be made by a parent who the pupil normally lives with)	
Relationship to child	
Full address (if different from child's above)	
Signature	
Date	

Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time

School Response

Date application received by school	
Date of response from school	

Dear (Insert parent title,forename, surname)	
Copy sent to (other parent) (Insert parent title, forename, surname)	

Pupil's percentage attendance year to date	
Number of sessions absent this academic year (total)	
Number of which are authorised	
Number of which are unauthorised	

Has this pupil had any previously recorded unauthorised leave of absence?	
Was a Penalty Notice Fine requested as a result?	
Are you aware of any Penalty Notice Fines that the parent or parents may have previously received for this pupil and/or a sibling/child for whom they hold parental/day to day care and responsibility?	

School response to parent/s request for leave of absence

Number of requested sessions authorised	
Number of requested sessions unauthorised	
Date pupil required to return to school	

Headteacher Signature	
Headteacher Name	
Date	