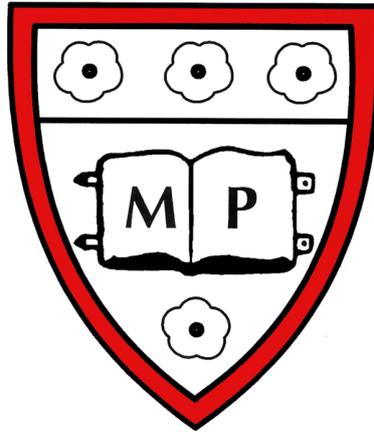


Malpas Park Primary School



“Making a difference together”

Policy for Attendance

At Malpas Park Primary School our purpose is to provide a secure, supportive and inspirational environment where every individual is valued and enabled to achieve their full potential. A care and respect for the community and their wider environment is instilled along with the development of flexible and transferable skills for life-long learning. At our school we make a difference together.”

April 2016

Policy for Attendance

Introduction

At Malpas Park Primary School we expect all children on roll to attend **every day**, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We also expect them to arrive punctually at school each day.

All children are expected to be on the main school yard by **08:55** when the start of school is signified. **If a child arrives in school later than 09:10 they will be marked as 'late'** within the register. All latecomers should be brought by parents or carers to the School Office to ensure that they have been registered in school.

We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, so that they can make the most progress possible.

Good school attendance is key to helping children have the best possible start in life and maximise their potential, both in terms of academic achievement and future employability. There is clear evidence which links attendance with educational achievement.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child receives an education regardless of their socio-economic background. Here at Malpas Park we have a social and moral obligation to work with and understand the needs of individual families to ensure the best possible outcomes for the child. The Head Teacher's targeted intervention and effective engagement with families plays a vital role in resolving issues of poor school attendance.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever legitimate reason, are prevented from coming to school.

The school engages in pupil assessment in order to accurately judge individual current performance, determine next steps and plan for their provision periodically throughout the whole year. However, **preparation for and administration of end of year annual national testing in literacy and numeracy is particularly pertinent during the months of May and June each year and the attendance of every child is essential.**

Under the **Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995**, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was **'authorised'** or **'unauthorised'**.

Definitions

“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 carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note, sends an email or telephones the school to explain the absence. In this instance there may be occasions when the school request written evidence that an appointment has been made and attended.
- 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 classify it as an authorised absence.

“Unauthorised absence”

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is absent without the permission of the school.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

When a Child is Absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly we expect the parent or carer to contact the school by telephone in the morning no later than 09:30 to report the reason for non-attendance.

The class teacher will record the absence in the register.

When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or carer to explain the absence.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher must take immediate action by notifying the School Office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.

Leave During a School Term Time

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw their child from school in any event during term time, including family holidays. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately require leave of absence from the Head Teacher and Governing Body for a child not to attend.

In this instance we expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance by completing an '**Application for Term Time Leave**' form (**Appendix 2**) and forwarding it to the Head Teacher, Mrs Guest via Mrs Kindred the School Support Officer.

Malpas Park Primary School permits parents and carers to apply for a maximum of ten days authorised holiday during term time. Authorisation is at the discretion of the Head Teacher. Each case will be scrutinised individually and authorisation given based upon the following criteria:-

- The child's average level of attendance across the rolling 12 months prior to the date of requested leave is 95% or above
- The child is always punctual to school
- The requested leave does not fall within the window of National Testing in May

In this instance we expect parents and carers to contact the school at least a week in advance by completing a '**Application for Term Time Leave - Family Holiday**' form (**Appendix 3**) and forwarding it to the Head Teacher, Mrs Guest via Mrs Kindred the School Support Officer

Both forms are available from Mrs Kindred at the School Office and on the school website.

Long-term Absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

Repeated or Unexplained Absences

Children whose attendance is **continually low or often unexplained** will be closely monitored. Letters are sent out every half term to those children whose attendance is a cause for concern. If attendance is not improved, the Education Welfare Officer and Education Social Worker are contacted and may carry out a home visit to address the current situation.

The School Governors, supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Punctuality

Children who are consistently late will also be closely monitored and the same procedures followed for those whose attendance is a concern.

Fixed Penalty Notices

A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) can be issued to parents by the Local Authority on the recommendation of Head Teacher and Governing Body for **regular non-attendance** at school during term time and **this includes persistent lateness.**

Welsh Government state that:-

'Where there is regular unauthorised absence, schools and local authorities have a number of options to help secure attendance. Fixed Penalty Notices are just one of a number of options available. The criteria for issuing penalty notices, which may differ

between local authorities, will be set out in their individual codes of conduct. Before issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice, each local authority must have its code of conduct in place'

Huw Lewis, Minister for Education – December 2014

In the first instance and in every case, the Head Teacher and Governing Body will attempt to work with the families of children who persistently demonstrate poor attendance or lack of punctuality to secure improvement without the need to issue a FPN.

Newport City Council's Code of Conduct came into force in September 2014 and the criteria is outlined below:-

The issuing of a FPN can be issued:-

- When there has been unauthorised absence for a period of at least ten sessions (five full days). This **does not have to be consecutive** (10 sessions or five full days in a row)
- In relation to family holidays
- In relation to persistent lateness and truancy

If, following consideration and assessment, the Head Teacher and Governing Body determine that following appropriate intervention there has been no improvement in attendance or punctuality, they can request the issuing of an FPN by the Local Authority.

The school will provide evidence and paperwork to support the fact that prior intervention has taken place and failed to secure improvement.

The Local Authority will issue the warning letters and the Fixed Penalty Notice.

Parents will receive a warning, a final warning and then a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Responding to a Warning of Fixed Penalty Notice

Following a warning letter regarding the issuing of a FPN, parents or carers have **15 days to respond**.

During these 15 days the pupil must have no further unauthorised absence or lateness. This is a 15 day period of improvement and does not apply to periods of unauthorised absence as a result of a family holiday taken during school term time.

The Education Welfare Service monitors the progression of the FPN at this point and takes the necessary action dependent upon the outcome of the improvement period.

Currently the Fixed Penalty Notice is **£60.00 and payable within 28 days** of the date of issue or **£120.00 payable within 42 days** of the date of issue.

Payment cannot be made in instalments and no payment is accepted after 42 days as non-payment of the fine results in formal prosecution.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the School Governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will be provided with a termly report from the Head Teacher. The Governing Body also has

the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. They will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The rates of attendance will be reported weekly to individual Class Teachers, on the school website, half-termly to the Governing Body and in the Parents' Handbook/School Prospectus, and in the Annual Governors' Report to Parents.

Class Teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their classes and for following up absences in the appropriate way. Particular attention is given each morning to the attendance of children categorised as '**vulnerable**' by both the Class and Head Teacher. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the School Support Officer immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Head Teacher, who will contact the parents or carers.

Rewards for Good Attendance

All the children who have very good attendance will be recognised and those on 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. At the end of the academic year we present a badge to pupils who have demonstrated excellent attendance and punctuality combined, which we encourage the children to wear as part of their school uniform.

This policy was agreed by the Governing Body and will be regularly reviewed.

Date Reviewed and Agreed: 28th April 2016

Date of next Review: March 2018

Signed: Kate Guest – Head Teacher



Signed: Denis Mills - Chair of Governing Body



IMPROVING ATTENDANCE

Dear Parents,

Newport City Council, in partnership with schools is continuing its promotion of good school attendance. The Welsh Assembly Government has set the target for attendance at 95%. The average attendance across Newport is currently just under that at around 93% and we aim to meet or exceed that figure at Malpas Park Primary School.

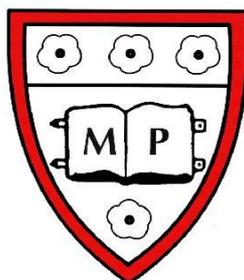
Our records indicate that during the Summer Term your child's attendance was below ____%. This could be for a variety of reasons, which might include family holidays, illness or other unavoidable causes.

In order that his/her continuity of learning is not disrupted, we ask that you do everything possible to ensure that he/she attends school regularly and at the same time help to maintain the high standard of attendance at Malpas Park Primary School.

Meanwhile, if you would like to speak to the Head Teacher or an Education Welfare Officer about your child's attendance, please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Malpas Park Primary School



"Making a difference together"

Application for Term Time Leave of Absence

Dear Parent or Carer,

Thank you for requesting an Application for Term Time Leave of Absence form. We would be very grateful if you could complete it and return it to school as soon as possible so that we are able to consider your application.

You will find the form on the reverse of this letter.

The law does not allow parents to automatically withdraw their children from school during term time. The law however, does allow schools to authorise leave of absence of up to ten school days in any one year. In doing so we are required to consider each application on an individual basis and as part of this we will consider:-

- The time of year and the pupil annual assessment timetable
- The overall attendance of the pupil
- Whether or not the request is 'reasonable' and justifiable in the context of the above criteria

Your application will be considered at the earliest opportunity upon receipt. **If you do not hear from us you can assume that the leave requested has been granted.** We will make contact with you if we feel there are any issues of concern with regard to the application, in-line with the criteria outlined above.

Yours sincerely,

The Head Teacher and Governing Body

Dear Head Teacher and Governing Body,

I write to request a period of authorised leave during school term time.

Name of Child:	
Class:	
Leave Begins:	
Leave Ends:	
Number of Days Lost:	

Reason for Requested Leave Please provide as much information as possible	
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Name of Parent/Carer:	(Print)
Date of Application:	

Signature of Parent/Carer: _____

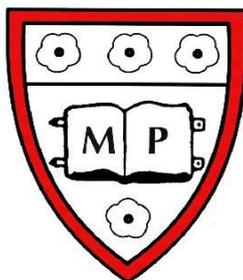
To be completed by the school

Current Attendance of Child	%	
Leave Granted	Authorised	Unauthorised

Reason:-

Signature: _____ on behalf of the Governing Body

Malpas Park Primary School



"Making a difference together"

Application for Term Time Leave - Family Holiday

Dear Head Teacher and Governing Body,

I am writing to apply for a period of leave during term time due to a family holiday. In doing so, I recognise the following:-

- I have a legal responsibility to ensure my child receives an education and therefore this leave may trigger the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice
- I do not have an automatic right to withdraw my child from school in any event during term time
- My child's academic progress is likely to be impeded due to this period of absence
- The application is subject to individual case scrutiny by the Head Teacher, delegated by school's Governing Body and authorisation is subject to set criteria – the child's current level of attendance and punctuality; whether or not the leave falls within the period of national testing

Name of Child:	
Class:	
Leave Begins:	
Leave Ends:	
Number of Days Lost:	

Name of Parent/Carer:	
Date of Application:	(Print)

Signature of Parent/Carer: _____