

Marden Primary Academy



Attendance Policy

Review: January 2024 Next Review: January 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 Children are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have and we are committed to encouraging all pupils to attend regularly so that they can thrive from the opportunities available to them. One of our main principles is to develop positive attitudes towards attendance and ensure our Academy is a happy, calm, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

1.2 Marden Primary Academy adheres to the principles and guidance as set out in the DfE publication, “Working together to improve school attendance.” September 2022. The Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance is Mrs Bryant (Assistant Principal).

1.3 The school is committed to promoting good attendance as part of its dedication to ensure quality educational provision to give its pupils the best start in life. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils but understand that there are some circumstances in which parents and pupils may require extra support to achieve this.

1.4 Leaders at Marden Primary Academy recognise that there are many factors that can affect non attendance and will ensure a holistic approach is taken whereby families are supported via any appropriate external referrals and/or partnerships where necessary, for example through additional support from early help. A targeted and joint approach with external services is taken in the cases of persistent and severe absence. Building strong relationships with families is paramount and listening to and understanding the barriers to attendance.

1.5 Good attendance is vital because:

- It improves children’s mental health and wellbeing
- Children learn more and enjoy their learning
- It helps children to make and maintain friendships
- Children are less likely to be at risk of underachievement
- Children do not miss out on enrichment opportunities that are vital to their development - Children thrive on routines

1.6 The responsibility for giving strategic direction to attendance is led by the governing body. This will include monitoring, reporting, reviewing and planning for attendance, developing a policy, promoting an ethos of good attendance and setting any targets. There is a governor appointed to lead on attendance, who will have regular contact with the Principal as part of the monitoring and review process.

1.7 The Principal and senior leadership team will ensure that the governing body’s objectives are met by the effective management of attendance and report to the

governing body in relation to this. Managing attendance will include: evaluating whole school data, surfacing trends, and attendance of defined groups, to enable planning of possible interventions; and considering individual cases of concern, to determine any appropriate interventions.

1.8 School staff are responsible to ensure they promote the school's ethos, set an example of attendance and punctuality, enable the school to keep accurate records of attendance for individual students.

1.9 Parents/Carers have responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.

1.10 Pupils have the responsibility to be on time for lessons and ready to learn.

1.11 The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of our school communities of the following:

- How the school encourages and enables good attendance
- How the school monitors and reviews attendance
- How the school monitors punctuality and lateness
- Authorised and unauthorised absences
- Leave of absence in term time
- Why attendance and punctuality matter

2. ENCOURAGING AND PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

2.1 The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which the children want to come: that the school is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

2.2 It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the Academy and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for attending.

2.3 All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised.

2.4 Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports at Parent Consultations, attendance is discussed. It follows that individual records of attendance are kept and are passed onto subsequent schools.

2.5 There will be visible displays and/or communication with parents that demonstrate the benefits of good attendance. Where used sensitively and without

discrimination, this may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class or individual level.

3. PUPILS WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS OR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

3.1 Some pupils may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil. There is the same attendance ambition for all pupils.

3.2 Marden Primary Academy is committed to ensuring good support for all pupils. This may include making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed.

3.3. The Inclusion Lead will ensure that there are strategies in place to remove any in-school barriers including support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.

3.4 A joined up pastoral approach will be put in place where needed, for example the Inclusion Lead will consider whether a time limited phased return would be appropriate. Where mental health is a barrier to attendance we seek advice from a range of agencies including looking at published guidance from the DfE. Where mental health is a barrier to a child's attendance we will review all cases on an individual basis in order to support the child and families personal circumstances.

If your child is suffering due to mental health issues here are some resources:

4. MONITORING AND REVIEWING ATTENDANCE

4.1 The school will regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils that require support and put effective strategies in place. Analysis of attendance data includes analysing patterns and trends and benchmarking attendance data.

4.2 By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The school will ensure that its staff receive appropriate training and support to appropriately use attendance codes in line with DfE guidance and best practice.

4.3 To enable the appropriate coding of attendance or the authorisation of absence, the school may request additional information or medical evidence*, e.g. in relation to medical appointments or illness. (Medical evidence may include: an appointment letter, a GP appointment card signed / stamped by a receptionist, a prescription, prescribed medication.) ***Medical evidence will always be requested for absences due to illness lasting 3 or more school days.**

4.4 Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session

and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by Administrative Staff.

4.5 All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes the Administrative Staff check the messages and operate 'first day calling' for those pupils absent with no reason given.

4.6 Attendance data is held electronically on Bromcom, accessible by the Trust, Principal, Senior Leadership Team, Attendance Officer and Administrative Staff who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records.

4.7 The Principal, Attendance Officer and Office Manager monitor the attendance of pupils weekly. In particular any patterns of persistent and severe absence will be a focus of monitoring to enable identification of any pupils that may require targeted support as quickly as possible.

4.8 Returns of school data are made daily to the Department for Education (DfE) and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.

4.9 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Team and Governors at the first Full Board meeting of the school year. Targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.

5. MONITORING AND IMPROVING LOW ATTENDANCE

The Academy acknowledges that there is no one standard response that is appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what support to offer.

Marden Primary Academy follows the DfE approach of '**Prevention, Early Intervention and Targeted support.**' See Appendix 3.

- In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance. In the first instance pupils and parents will be supported to address any in school barriers to attendance.
- **90-95% attendance** - monitored by the Principal, Attendance Officer and Office Manager. Pupils may be at risk of poor attendance and so will be monitored weekly. The Principal and Pastoral team will use attendance and absence data rigorously to support pupils with increasing levels of absence, arriving at school late or taking leave in term time without permission before it becomes a regular pattern.
- **Below 90%** - Where absence escalates to pupils missing 10% or more, Marden Primary Academy will ensure targeted support that may include letters to parents/carers about attendance and/or an action plan being drawn up with the family to improve attendance. Marden Primary Academy may draw on support from the Leigh Academies Trust Attendance Team where appropriate. Referrals

may also be made in instances of low attendance to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service.

- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help referral to support the family or seek other support from external services.
- **For pupils with severe absence (those missing 50% or more of school)**, there will be a joint targeted approach where all relevant services will support the pupil and help address any barriers to attendance. A parenting contract may be drawn up with the local authority where voluntary support has not been effective. In some cases, an Education Supervision Order may be appropriate if an early help plan or parenting contract has not been successful in the case of severely absent pupils.

6. REPORTING ABSENCE

- It is the parent's responsibility to contact Marden Primary Academy whenever their child is absent and on the first day of absence.
- Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.45 a.m. All pupils who arrive late must report to the school office, where the reason for lateness will be recorded.
- The contact for attendance in the School Office is Miss Holness. The school office telephone number is 01622 831393.
- Any unexplained absences will be followed up by the school.

7. PUNCTUALITY AND LATENESS

7.1 The Principal, Attendance Officer and Office Manager monitor lateness of pupils as being punctual for school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. The gates open at 8.30 a.m. for all year groups and close at 8:45am so there is a window of 15 minutes where the children can come into school.

7.2 The school day starts after the gates close at 8:45 a.m. for all year groups. Pupils who arrive after these times will be recorded as late to school (L code). The Registers close at 9:15 a.m. and after this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code). The Afternoon begins at 1:00 p.m. for all years.

7.3 Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Principal will write to the parents/carers using the appended letter about punctuality, including a copy of the child's registration certificate, and stating the total minutes late over a determined period.

7.4 If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school may make a formal referral to PIAS.

8. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

8.1 The DfE recognises the importance of regular attendance, and it is a requirement for the Principal to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. The final decision is made by the Principal.

8.2 Wherever possible parents are expected to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time.

8.3 If a child is absent from school for any reason the parent must inform the school in person, in writing or by telephone as soon as possible of absence and reason for it. Such calls are always logged and the class teacher informed.

8.4 Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the school received no reason/explanation or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

9. LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

Leave of Absence

9.1 The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

9.2 Principals **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.

9.3 Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Principal must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

9.4 Principals will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

9.5 The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.

9.6 Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

9.7 Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

9.8 All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the PIAS at Kent County Council.

9.9 Kent Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Kent County Council's Non School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. A copy of which can be found at https://www.kelsi.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/62126/KCC-Penalty-Notice-Code-of-Conduct.pdf

9.10 If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Kent County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996 or prosecution under Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

9.11 It is important to note, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices in the amount of £120 each, totalling £240 for both children, this is reduced to £60 per child if paid within 21 days).

10. WHY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY MATTERS

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

11. CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

11.1 Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to Kent County Council's via

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-attendance/children-missing-education>

11.2 Reasonable steps to be taken by school staff include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes).

- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family

11.3 All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the pupil's file

12. Removing a pupil from roll

12.1 As per The Education Regulations Act 2006 Section 8, when all possible actions have been taken we will remove the student from academy roll due to continued serious absence.

12.2 Where a pupil has failed to attend the Academy within 10 school days, immediately following an authorised leave of absence, and there are no reasonable grounds for the pupil not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the pupil is, and if unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from roll. ([Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#))

12.3 Where a pupil has failed to attend the Academy for 20 school days or more and absence is unauthorised, and there are no reasonable grounds for the pupil not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the pupil is, and if unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from roll. ([Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#))

13. IN CONCLUSION

13.1 It is our belief that good attendance and punctuality is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience in which pupils progress emotionally, physically and academically.

13.2 Marden Primary Academy greatly appreciates parental support to reduce the total amount of days lost due to holidays. The Academy is committed to working in partnership with parents to enable all children to reach their academic potential and to support their social development and for this to happen individual attendance needs to be as high as possible and we all need to play our part.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Academy Letters for Persistent and Severe Absence

[Stage 1 Attendance Letter MPA](#)

[Stage 2 Attendance Letter MPA](#)

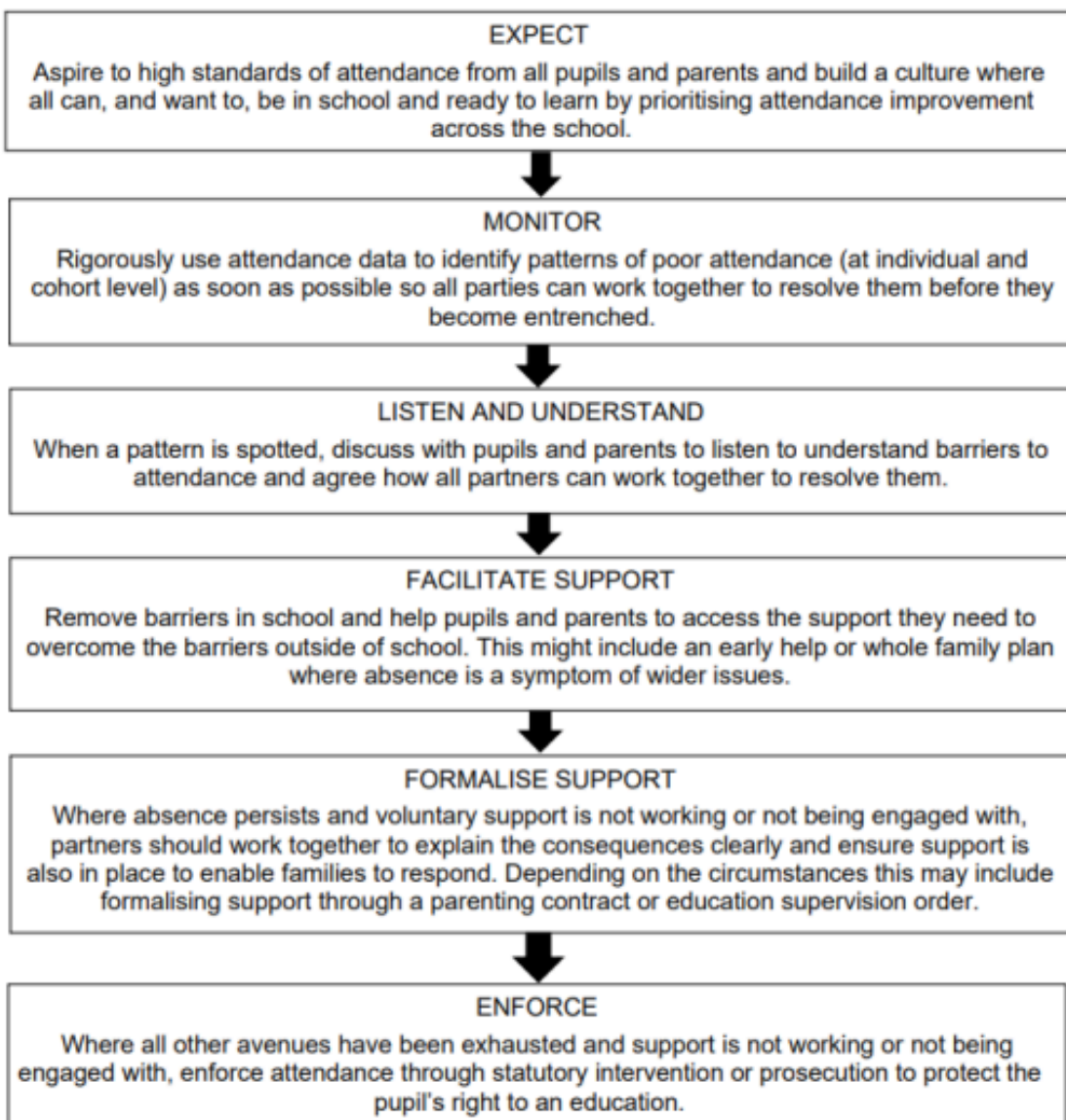
[Stage 3 Attendance Letter MPA](#)

[Stage 4 Attendance Letter MPA](#)

[Praise/Improvement Letter MPA](#)

Appendix 2

Our approach to working together to improve attendance



Appendix 3

Approach to Managing Attendance : 'Prevention, Early Intervention, Targeted'.

