



MEDWAY COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

March 2026 – 2027

Date – 27.3.26

Date:			
Review Date:		Headteacher S Williams	Signed 
Ratified by Governing Body:			
Michael Berriman		Chair of Governors	Signed 

Introduction

Medway Primary School recognises that good attendance is central to raising standards of attainment and progress; this policy is written with this acknowledgement in mind.

To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all pupils attend regularly and on time. Pupils should aim to attend every day that the school is open. We set a target for all pupils to aim for 100% attendance with the expectation all pupils achieve at least 97%. As a school we define regular attendance as 97% or above.

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents have a legal duty to ensure their child receives a full-time, efficient and suitable education from the start of compulsory school age until the last Friday in June of the school year they turn 16.

If a child is registered at a school, parents must ensure the child attends regularly. Regular attendance means attending every day the school is open, unless absence is authorised.

As such, we will work closely with the Education Welfare Service to support regular school attendance. **It is therefore very important that you make every effort to ensure that your child attends school regularly.**

The name of the person responsible for leading Attendance at Medway Community Primary School is Mr Atkinson a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Aims

- 1) **Promote Regular Attendance:** Encourage students to attend school regularly and punctually.
 - Maximise the overall percentage of pupil attendance and punctuality.
 - Reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent and raise the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the school community,
- 2) **Consistent Monitoring:** Establish clear procedures for monitoring and managing attendance.
 - Ensure a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data.
 - Ensure a whole school approach to ensure consistency of intervention strategies.
- 3) **Addressing Barriers:** Identify and mitigate factors that contribute to absenteeism.
 - Ensure an inclusive environment in school for parents/carers to work in partnership to ensure excellent school attendance and achievement for all pupils
- 4) **Collaboration:** Work with parents, students, and external agencies to support consistent attendance.
 - Provide support advice and guidance for parents, pupils and staff.
 - Continue to promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority, Children's Services, Health and other partner agencies.

Responsibilities

Attendance is everyone's responsibility, all members of staff, parent/carers and pupils.

• Parents/Carers:

Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours.

Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life.

Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.

Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.

Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance

Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually.

Inform the school on the first day of absence.

Attend meetings to discuss attendance issues if requested.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Pupils:

Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.

Attend all lessons ready to learn.

Bring a note of explanation from their parents or guardians to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen.

Follow the school procedure if they arrive late.

School Staff:

Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.

Form positive relationships with pupils and parents, asking pertinent questions to show they care.

Monitor daily attendance and follow up on absences.

Support pupils in maintaining good attendance.

Communicate effectively with parents regarding attendance issues.

Attendance Officer:

- Track and record daily attendance using SIMS.
- Make first response calls to parents for unexplained absences.
- Prepare reports and coordinate with the Deputy Head of Safeguarding for interventions.

Pastoral Team

- Oversee the implementation of attendance strategies.
- Conduct home visits and manage serious attendance concerns.
- Lead data reviews and plan interventions.

Governors:

- Monitor the effectiveness of the attendance policy and support its implementation

Our Procedures

A child not attending school regularly is considered to be a safeguarding concern. This is why information about the cause of any absence is required, and where possible appropriately evidenced.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 1) states:

“All staff should be aware that children being absent from school or college, particularly repeatedly, and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, ‘honour’-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of their school’s or college’s unauthorised absence procedures and children missing from education procedures”.

Registration

School gates open at 8.30am and close at 8.50am. The register remains open until 9.10am

Class teachers will mark attendance at the start of each school day and after lunch.

Attendance is recorded in SIMS and monitored daily.

First Response

By 9:30 AM, the Pastoral Team will call parents of absent students if no reason has been provided.

The parents of our vulnerable pupils may receive specific calls from Pastoral staff.

Immediate follow-up is conducted if the absence is unexplained.

Monitoring and Review

- Weekly reviews of attendance data are conducted to identify trends and issues.
- Pupils with attendance below 95% are flagged for additional support and intervention.

Attendance is reported at parent evenings and in end-of-year reports. Pupils’ attendance is graded in an easy-to-understand manner to assist parents who may be new to the country or EAL. Pupils are graded as:

Gold - 99%+

Silver - 98%

Bronze - 95%

Requires Improvement (Red) - Below 95%

In the case of a persistent absence, the cause will be determined in conjunction with the child's parent/carer. Pupils will be set a target for their attendance and may be provided with a range of support, including:

- Reminder text messages
- Reminder phone calls
- Free attendance at breakfast club
- Signposting to other support, including:
- Mental health support (supported by CFW and mental health lead)
- Parenting classes
- Support from a named teacher or member of staff at the school

Interventions

- Initial contact with parents is made to discuss attendance concerns and offer support.
- Action plans are developed for students with persistent absence issues (below 85% attendance).

Support to School intervention may be triggered.

Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents must make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. **The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole session for an appointment.**

In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging a pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent.

We will invite parents to attend a support meeting as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the School Nursing Team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with our Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions policy. We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

Support

At Medway Primary School we recognize that a range of factors can influence a child's attendance, and we are committed to providing comprehensive support when concerns arise. Our approach addresses the academic, social, and emotional needs of each student to ensure they feel supported and encouraged to attend school regularly. The following are the key strategies and services we employ to help children with emerging attendance concerns:

1. Academic Support

Personalised support for pupils whose absence has impacted their learning, we offer tailored academic interventions, including Emergency Curriculum sessions, Curriculum Anchoring support, or one on-one support.

Homework Clubs and After-School Support: To reduce any feelings of being overwhelmed by missed work, we provide extra support through afterschool homework club giving pupils the chance to complete homework in a supported environment.

Flexible Learning Options: Where appropriate, we may explore alternative learning arrangements, such as a modified timetable or blended learning options, to help children reintegrate into the school setting after extended absences.

2. Pastoral and Emotional Support

Pastoral Support: If attendance concerns stem from social or emotional issues. We provide support for children who may be struggling with anxiety, depression, or other challenges affecting their ability to attend school.

Meet and Greets: To support students' emotional regulation and reduce anxiety, we meet some pupils at the door and dedicate time first thing in the morning to help them transition. These help children develop coping strategies for stress and build resilience.

Safe Spaces for Vulnerable Students: For students experiencing social difficulties or anxiety, we provide safe spaces within the school, where they can retreat if overwhelmed. This helps ease transitions back into the classroom environment.

Staggered start and finish times: High need children who struggle with transitioning from home to school may have different start and end times. This adjustment supports emotional regulation, reduces barriers to attendance, and enables pupils to access learning in a calm and positive way.

3. Family Engagement and Support

Home-School Communication: We establish regular, open communication with parents to keep them informed of their child's attendance and progress. We work together to identify potential challenges and provide advice on how to support attendance at home.

Parent Workshops and Guidance: We offer workshops for parents on topics such as managing routines, promoting positive behaviour, and supporting children's mental health. These sessions aim to equip families with tools to support their child's regular school attendance.

Family Support Workers: In more complex cases, we may the Pastoral team to visit families at home, offer practical assistance (e.g. Support to School or morning calls), and connect them to external services such as housing or financial support.

Completion of external agency forms is not a statutory duty of the school and will be considered on a case-by-case basis, particularly where attendance is impacted by SEND, medical or safeguarding factors.

Reporting and Record Keeping

- Use of SIMS and CPOMS
- Maintain detailed records of attendance and interventions using SIMS and CPOMS.
- Ensure all absences are accurately recorded and categorised.

Communication

- Provide regular updates to parents about their child's attendance.
- Schedule meetings with parents to address ongoing attendance issues.

External Reporting

- Submit attendance data to local authorities as required by law.

Authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, or evidence to support the reason submitted, then absences cannot be authorised. It is the Headteacher, not parents who make the decision to authorise absence from school.

Unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- Parents/carers giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings.
- Absences which have not been explained.
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get their mark.

This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority.

Persistent Absenteeism

Pupils are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DfE) if their attendance falls below 90%.

This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DfE expects schools to intervene well before pupils reach a level of persistent absence.

A pupil who is persistently absent is one who misses 10% or more of their schooling for ANY REASON, from the beginning of the school year to the end of any given half term period as indicated below:

- Parents/carers are responsible to ensure pupil attendance and punctuality, school can support this in many ways.
- Whilst we understand that pupils can be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a pupil is reluctant to attend or a parent/carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution.
- Parent/carers are asked to contact the Inclusion Officer in the first instance.

Below is a table which sets out current thresholds for Persistent Absence and can be referred to as a means of determining the amount of sessions missed to meet this criteria:

Terms	Number of days missed to be defined as persistently absent
September to October	3.5 days
September to Christmas	7 days
September to February	10 days
September to Easter	12.5 days
September to May	15.5 days
September to the Summer	19 days

Leave of Absence During Term Time

The Law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Parents/carers can receive a Penalty Notice for taking their child on holiday during term time without prior consent from school. Consent cannot be given retrospectively. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Where a pupil has accumulated 10 unauthorised sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10-school-week period, the local authority may consider issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice.

The first Fixed Penalty Notice is £80 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days. If a second offence occurs within three years, a further penalty notice of £160 may be issued. A third offence within three years may result in prosecution. Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent/carer for each child.

Requests for Exceptional Circumstances Leave of Absence

Requests for exceptional circumstances leave of absence must be in writing to the Headteacher and can only be authorised by the Headteacher. Reasons such as:

- a close family bereavement
- taking part in a significant religious event would be acceptable for short absences.

Unacceptable reasons for missing school include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday.
- Shopping for uniforms.
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes.
- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation.
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend.
- Absences taken without the authorisation of the school.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Updates will be made as needed to comply with new regulations or changes in school practice.

MEDWAY COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



***Attendance Quick
Guide Policy***

March 2026 – 2027



Every Day Matters

Coming to school every day helps children:

- Learn
- Make friends
- Feel safe and happy

Children should come to school **every day** and **on time**.

School Times

-  **School opens:** 8:30am
-  **Register closes:** 9:00am

Arriving late means your child misses learning

Good Attendance

- We want children to be in school **every day**
 - Good attendance is **97% or more**
 - Missing school makes learning harder

If Your Child Is Unwell

- Keep your child at home if they are too ill
 - **Phone the school on the first day**
- If absence happens often, we may ask for proof

Medical Appointments

- Book appointments **outside school time if possible**
 - Tell the school before the appointment
 - Bring your child back to school afterwards

Holidays in Term Time

- ✗** Holidays during term time are **not allowed**

Taking holidays without permission may lead to a **fine**

Being Late

- Being late is the same as missing school
 - Lots of late days affect learning
 - Please arrive on time every day

If School Feels Hard

We are here to help

Some children may:

- Be met at the door
- Start at a quieter time
- Have extra emotional support

Please talk to us early.

The Law

Parents must make sure children go to school.

This is the law.

Missing school without a good reason can lead to:

⚠ A warning

⚠ A fine

⚠ Court action

Working Together

Good attendance works best when:

- School and parents work together
 - Problems are shared early
- Children feel safe and supported

Need help? Please talk to us.