



St Meriadoc Infant and Junior Academies

Attendance Policy

Approved by:	Board of Directors	Date: 14/07/2021
Last reviewed:	N/A	
Next review due by:	July 2023	

Rationale

We expect all children on roll at St Meriadoc Infant and Junior Academies of The Rainbow Multi Academy Trust to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

We expect our children's' attendance to be at least 96%.

We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the 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 also make the best provision we can for those children who, due to ill health, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Board of Directors 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 the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Parents whose children are of compulsory school age and registered at school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they fail to do this, they are guilty of an offence and may be given a penalty notice or prosecuted under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Covid-19 and Attendance

Attendance expectations

It is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Schools will follow up to date Guidance on who should need to isolate and not attend school as and when this is updated.

Arrival and Registration

Children are expected to arrive for registration at the following times for their year group

St Meriadoc Infant Academy – 8.45am

St Meriadoc Junior Academy – 8.40am (classroom doors open from 8.30am to help families moving across both sites)

The register is taken twice a day, on arrival and after lunch. A day counts as 2 sessions of attendance.

Children can attend our Breakfast club, which begins at 8am in both schools and must be booked in advance.

Morning registration ends at:

St Meriadoc Infant Academy – 8.55am

St Meriadoc Junior Academy – 8.50am

If a child arrives after the registration period, they will be marked in as late. After 9.15am this will become an unauthorised absence unless a valid reason is provided.

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/carer outside the normal school hours are signed in or out from the school office. This signing in or out register is used in the case of an emergency or fire drill. During Covid – a telephone call or email to the office is required to sign your child out.

Illness and Medical Appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment. St Meriadoc Infant and Juniors ask parents to inform the office the day before this appointment and provide evidence of medical appointments such as medical card, hospital letters.

The office should be informed by 8.30am during the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence. Parents are asked to leave a telephone answering machine message, speak directly with a member of the office team from 8.00am onwards. If parents do not provide a suitable reason for absence within 5 working days, the absence will be classed as 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 guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. 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 mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence: An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Head.

Definition of parent: Under section 576 of the Education Act 1996 (EA 1996) a

'parent' in relation to a child or young person is defined as:

- The biological parents of a child, whether they are married or not.
- Anyone who although not a biological parent has parental responsibility for a child. In family law, parental responsibility means all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority that a parent has in relation to the child.
- A person with parental responsibility can make decisions about the child's upbringing and is entitled to information about their child. For example, they can give consent to the child's medical treatment and make decisions about the child's education. They also have the right to receive information about their child's health and education.
- Any person, who although not a biological parent and who does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person
- A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of their biological or legal relationship with the child (for example, a foster carer or family and friends" carer

who has been delegated responsibility for taking day-to-day decisions about the child but does not have parental responsibility).

If a child is absent

- When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register
- Parents/carers are expected to telephone or email the school by 8.30am on the morning of the day of absence to inform the school that their child will be absent. They are asked to state a reason.
- If no message has been received regarding the reason for absence by 9.30am the office will attempt to contact the parent or carer informing them of their child's absence and requesting a reason for absence.
- In the unlikely event of a child's absence where the office is unable to reach a parent or carer by 11.00am emergency safeguarding procedures may be taken by the Head.

Leave of Absence

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

- Heads 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. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Heads will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- 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.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance (using Appendix 1); 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, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Education Welfare Service of Cornwall Council
- The Cornwall Council Education Welfare Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence.

'The 1996 Education Act makes it very clear that parents must ensure that their child of school age receives regular, full-time education. For most parents this is in school. Children must attend the school they are registered in. Only the school can authorise a child's absence. If a child is not registered or does not attend their educational provision, Cornwall Council may take legal action against the parent/carers, if appropriate.'

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

If you would like to request a Leave of Absence (LOA) please:

- Request the 'Application for leave of absence during term time' form available from the office – via phone, email or in person

When making an application for leave of absence during term time the information provided on the form needs to be as detailed as possible and returned to school with as much notice as possible.

The Head will aim to respond within 5 working days and may request a meeting with you to discuss the leave request further before making a decision. You will then be informed in writing as to whether the leave request has been authorised or unauthorised.

Please ensure you keep copies of the leave paperwork to provide you with evidence of the absence authorisation.

Any unauthorised leave of absence (LOA), will be reported to the Education Welfare Service by the Head.

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 their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Repeated Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences remain on the child's record and will be reported to Cornwall Council which may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (£120 fine to be paid with 28 days of issue which reduces to £60 if paid within 21 days. Fixed Penalty Notices are issued in respect of each absent child and each parent)

Attendance and punctuality are monitored by the school with the support of the EWO. The Head and attendance officer monitor your child's attendance on a monthly basis. Other members of the Senior Leadership Team and the class room teachers may also support this process.

If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences and their attendance dips below 95% the following system is in place:

STEP 1:

The parents/carers will receive a phone call from an appropriate member of staff in school to ensure that support is in place for the child and their family. The parents will be invited to a School Attendance meeting involving appropriate staff. At this stage an Attendance Support Plan may be introduced to help improve the child's attendance; (Appendix 2). This will explore any barriers to learning and support the parents to improve their child's attendance.

STEP 2:

If the attendance does not improve within a month of the above, and the child's attendance is falling below 93% the parents will receive written warning letter; Appendix 3, indicating their child's

attendance level. The school will review and if necessary update the Attendance Support Plan. The attendance will be monitored as it improves, or it will be used as part of the evidence base should legal action be required.

STEP 3:

If your child's attendance falls below 90% then this is classed as persistent absence which would automatically trigger high level family support services from school and other agencies including the offer of Early Help, a structured conversation and invitation to attendance clinic in school. The family will receive a letter, Appendix 4, again stating the attendance percentage.

STEP 4:

If repeated persistent absence continues, further written, face-to-face and formal meetings will take place, Appendix 5; to provide both challenge and support to parents/carers to improve your child's level of attendance. When absence continues to fall, medical and illnesses will need to be *evidenced* with a medical note/certificate/letter to authorise any absence. Should this evidence not be presented or is not satisfactory then the pupil will receive a mark of unauthorised absence. A representative from school or the Education Welfare Officer, (EWO), may also visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

STEP 5:

Following the involvement of the EWO, the Local Authority has the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. The consequences of this may include Fixed Penalty Notice (£120 fine to be paid within 28 days of issue which reduces to £60 if paid within 21 days. Fixed Penalty Notices are issues in respect of each absent child and each parent.

Monitoring and Reviewing

It is the overall responsibility of the Board to monitor attendance.

The Board of Directors also has the responsibility for this policy, and for monitoring its consistent application. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures are as high as they should be. The school will keep accurate records on file for a period of three years.

The attendance team are responsible for monitoring attendance and punctuality on a daily basis with the support of the EWO. The attendance team will monitor your child's attendance on a monthly basis. Other members of the SLT may also support this process.

Persistent absence is regular absence causing a pupil's attendance to fall below 90%. At St Meriadoc Infant and Junior Academies the target for attendance is 96%. If the attendance team identify that attendance is a concern, they will action prevention processes and procedures in collaboration with the parents/carers. To see how valuable this time is, please see the attached information about the impact of learning time lost from absence and lateness – Appendix 6.

Not all diseases, illness and conditions prevent children from attending school – for guidance see appendix 1 – Health Protection for schools, nurseries and other childcare facilities.

The Charlie Taylor Report (DFE) (Government advisor on behaviour) outlines the key findings of school attendance and persistent absenteeism nationally.

The Importance of Attendance

One of the most effective ways that school can improve achievement is by improving attendance. Even the very best teachers struggle to raise the standards of children who are not in school regularly. Schools that relentlessly pursue good attendance also get better overall attainment and behaviour.

Appendix 1

Application for leave of absence during term time

This form is available from the main office – please phone, email or collect a paper copy.

St Meriadoc Infant Academy – 01209 713982

St Meriadoc Junior Academy – 01209 713436

Appendix 2

My Child’s Success Plan

My child was present _____ days
My child was absent _____ days
My goal is to improve my child’s attendance.
I will ensure my child misses no more than
for the rest of the year (9 or fewer absences
= satisfactory attendance)

Possible strategies to reach my child’s attendance goals

- I will talk to my child about how going to school every day will help them do well in school and achieve their hopes and dreams
- I will keep an attendance chart at home. At the end of the week, I will recognise my child for attending school every day with _____ (i.e. a visit to the park, a new book, a break from doing chores, a special treat)
- I will make sure my child is in bed by _____ pm and the alarm clock is set for _____
- If my child complains of a stomachache or headache and medical conditions have been ruled out, I will send him/her to school anyway and call so that he/she can check in with my child during the day
- If my child has a cold but no fever, I will send him/her to school anyway. If I don’t have a thermometer, I will purchase or borrow one
- I will find a relative, friend or neighbour who can take my child to school if I can’t make it
- If my child is absent, I will contact his/her teacher to find out what he/she has missed
- I will set up medical and appointments for weekdays after school

To improve my child’s attendance, I commit to the following:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

We will review progress to meet this goal in two months

Family signature

Date

Teacher signature

Date

Appendix 3

This letter will be adapted to meet the age and needs of the child

Dear

Re:

Here at SCHOOL NAME we make it a priority to support pupils who, for a variety of reasons, have a below average attendance. Days missing education can have a significant impact on the learning and progression for all pupils and we welcome the opportunity to support those experiencing any difficulties.

currently has an attendance of % which is cause for concern.

We accept that illness is a part of everyday life and this can result in absence from school. When your child is unwell, it can be hard deciding whether to keep them off school. Whether you decide to send them into school will depend on how server the illness is. If you are concerned, you should always consult a medical professional. Our school website has a list of common conditions with recommendations that may help you with your decision.

Many common conditions can be treated with Calpol/paracetamol before your child comes into school; we will of course inform you if your child becomes unwell or their symptoms worsen. Please do not keep your child at home 'just in case' when they could be in class learning with their friends.

If you make the decision to keep your child at home you must inform the school on each day of absence as early as possible. Please call TEL number or email ???????? to report the absence.

Medical appointments should be kept to a minimum and routine check ups should be arranged where possible in the holiday periods. Again, please inform the school in a timely manner if an appointment is necessary during the school day.

Thank you for your help and support in securing the very best attendance for your child.

Please contact NAME if you would like to discuss this letter further.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 4

This letter will be adapted to meet the age and needs of the child

Dear

Re:

I wrote to you recently to express my concern regarding attendance. This has since deteriorated and is currently at %. I enclose a registration certificate for your attention. I would like to remind you that attendance directly impacts upon progress.

Every pupil at SCHOOL NAME is expected to achieve a minimum of % attendance and the majority do each year of their school life. Whilst it is appreciated that children are unwell from time to time and there can be exceptional circumstances for an absence, please think carefully before keeping your child at home.

If has any medical issues that we are unaware, of which affect his/her attendance, please contact us urgently so that we can provide the necessary support for your family. If you have any concerns that are preventing your child from attending school, again, please contact TEL number or email ????????

As part of our attendance tracking and monitoring, I would like to meet with you to discuss my concerns.

I have made an appointment for you on

If you are unable to make this appointment, please call TEL number

I look forward to meeting with you.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 5

This letter will be adapted to meet the age and needs of the child

Dear

Re:

Following my letter to you dated _____ informing you that _____ attendance had fallen below _____ %, I have now identified through continued monitoring, that _____ attendance has deteriorated further and is now _____ %.

This is well below the school's average attendance and completely unsatisfactory.

As a result of this poor attendance, according to the school's policy on absence, the decision has been taken not to authorize any further absence without receipt of medical evidence.

This can include a medical practitioner note, an appointment card and/or labelled medication.

Please be aware that should _____ attendance at school fail to improve, we will have no alternative other than to pass the matter to our Education Welfare Officer, who will contact you at home to discuss your child's poor attendance.

If you would like to contact me regarding this letter please call 01209 216111.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 6

The importance and effect of school attendance is illustrated in the following table:

Descriptor	Threshold attendance	Actual attendance	Whole days of absence	Learning hours lost
Excellent	100%	190 days	0	0
	99%	188 days	2	10
Good	98%	186 days	4	20
	97%	184 days	6	30
	96%	182.5 days	7.5	37.5
Cause for concern	95%	180.5 days	9.5	47.5
	94%	179 days	11	55
	93%	177 days	13	65
	92%	175 days	15	75
	91%	173 days	17	85
Unsatisfactory	90%	171 days	19	95
	89%	169 days	21	105
	88%	167 days	23	115
	87%	165 days	25	125
Serious cause for concern	86%	163 days	27	135
Critical	85%	161.5 days	28.5	142.5
	84%	159.5 days	30.5	152.5
	83%	158 days	32	160
	82%	156 days	34	170
	81%	154 days	36	180
	80%	152 days	38	190