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ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale

This Policy outlines the underlying philosophy, purpose, nature, organisation and management of pupil attendance at Murdishaw West Community Primary School.

The Policy is a result of consultation with the wider school community and an analysis of existing attendance data to establish current absence trends. It aims to ensure the enjoyment and achievement for all pupils at Murdishaw West Community Primary School.

Principles

The Governors, Head Teachers and staff wish to ensure every child has the opportunity to:

1. Fully participate in school life
2. Enjoy and achieve
3. Feel a valued member of the school community

Aims

- To ensure that persistent absence in line with the national average (currently 9.9%)
- To improve attendance in line with the national average (currently 95%)
- To ensure there is a whole school, graduated response to improving punctuality and attendance
- To identify groups of pupils and individuals whose absence causes concern
- To identify pupils persistently absent from school (20% or more absence)
- To track pupils' attendance and monitor and evaluate progress
- To identify main causes of absence and take action to address them

Legal Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance

Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, a parent is responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age receives an efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs a child might have.



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Parental Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance

Parents must:

- Contact school on first day of absence to provide a reason for non-attendance
- Update the school on the third day of non-attendance if the absence is expected to continue
- Request leave in advance for holidays/extended absences in term time by following the school leave of absence policy (see Appendix 1)
- Work with the school and any other agency to resolve any difficulties which may affect regular school attendance

School Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance

Mr Stanley is the school attendance leader. As the attendance leader of the school he will ensure:

- Registers are accurately marked and maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- A whole school approach to reinforce good attendance, teaching and learning to encourage all pupils to attend and achieve
- Individuals or group attendance targets are set and understood by staff, parents and pupils

Registration

Parents should ensure pupils are in school for **8.50 a.m.** for morning registration and **1.00 p.m.** for afternoon registration.

A pupil arriving after **8.50 a.m. and 1.00 p.m.** Will be marked late (L).

A pupil arriving after **9.30 a.m.** Will be marked as late after the register closes (U). This is regarded as an unauthorised absence for the session.

A pupil arriving in school after **8.50 a.m. /1.00 p.m.** should follow school procedures for late arrivals. Parents/carers must sign their child into the late book at the front office, providing the reason for lateness. For pupils who walk to school alone (and which is noted on the home/school agreement), the office staff will sign the child in late and then inform parent/carer by telephone (or text in the case of not being able to contact parents) of the child's lateness. Children whom parents have agreed can walk to school unsupervised that arrive late, lose minutes of their Golden Time equal to the number of minutes they are late.

Parents whose child(ren) are persistently arriving after **8.50 a.m.** on 10 or more occasions will be invited into school to discuss the lateness and seek a resolution. Where school action fails to bring about an improvement, the matter will be discussed with Education Welfare Service and consideration given to issuing a Penalty Notice.



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Categorisation of Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The parent must provide an explanation for any period of absence from school, it is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to decide whether or not the absence will be authorised.

School will usually authorise absences where a pupil is:

- Unable to attend school due to illness
- Requires emergency dental/medical appointments. Where ever possible routine dental/medical appointments should be made after school or during school holidays
- Absent due to other exceptional circumstances.

School will not authorise absence for:

- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Days out
- Looking after brothers/sisters

School may request medical verification where a pupil's attendance falls below 90%.

School Systems for Promoting Regular Attendance

School will:

- Contact parents on first day of a pupil's absence, where no notification has been received from the parent/carer by **9.30 a.m.** to ensure the safety of the pupil
- Analyse individual attendance pupil data to identify patterns of absence causing concern
- Contact parents by letter when pupils' attendance falls **below 90%** to highlight concerns
- Invite parents in to school for a discussion when a pupil's attendance is **below 90%**
- Invite parents to an Attendance Meeting with Head Teacher and Education Welfare Officer where attendance falls **below 90%**
- Consider referral to Education Welfare when school action has failed to bring about an improvement in the pupil's attendance
- Use Individual Attendance Support Plans for pupils with attendance difficulties
- Use Parenting Contracts where exclusion or behavioural issues are affecting a pupil's attendance in school
- In partnership with LA use a full range of strategies, including legal interventions, to support improvement to attendance
- Provide appropriate support to pupils to ensure successful reintegration following long term absence
- Complete a Multi-Agency Plan(MAP) where complex and significant factors requiring a multi-agency response is identified



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- Implement a range of rewards for pupils with high levels of attendance and those improving attendance
- Work proactively to engage with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties which may be affecting school attendance, through parents evenings, pupil reviews and home-school agreements
- Provide a full and diverse curriculum to engage and motivate pupils
- Make parents aware of the impact of poor attendance on attainment

Persons responsible for attendance in Murdishaw West Community Primary School

- Head Teacher - attendance leader
- Designated attendance administrator (responsible for identifying absence to the Head Teacher)
- First day contact link (administrator to make contact with parent/carer where no reason has yet been given for absence, on the first day of absence).
- Curriculum sub-committee responsible for attendance

Review of Policy

- This policy will be formally reviewed every 2 years or as legislation changes
- This policy will be less formally reviewed on an annual basis
- A copy of this policy is available on the school website
- The policy is given in full to all parents of children who are starting at Murdishaw West Community Primary School
- A paper copy of the policy is in the staff handbook and the handbook for governors
- The principles of this policy will be raised in the school newsletter regularly throughout the year
- Any complaints arising from the implementation of this policy should be addressed to the Head Teacher in the first instance

Headteacher: Mr C Stanley

Signature:

Date:

Chair of Governors: Mr J Stockton

Signature:

Date:



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Appendix 1

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

1. Aims

The aim of this policy is to set out the way in which Murdishaw West monitors and promotes the attendance and punctuality of its pupils. Murdishaw West is committed to maximising the potential of every child and good attendance and punctuality are essential to this aim. We feel this will be achieved, with the support of parents/carers by ensuring that leave of absence will not be taken in school time, other than in exceptional circumstances. Absence during term time for any reason interrupts the continuity of teaching and learning and disrupts the educational progress of pupils.

2. The Law

From 1 September 2013 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amends the 2006 Regulations and makes clear that Head Teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances

3. Leave of Absence

In exceptional circumstances Murdishaw West will consider a request for leave of absence for one period of absence during the academic year.

4. Exceptional Circumstances

The Head Teacher or person designated by the Head Teacher will determine what are considered to be exceptional circumstances.

The following may be examples of exceptional circumstances:

- To allow a pupil to return to their country of origin for family, religious or cultural reasons
- Unavoidable circumstances e.g., the parent/carer has inflexible leave allocation, and this has been confirmed by the employer.
- A family member is seriously ill.
- There has been a death or significant trauma in the family and a leave of absence is deemed appropriate.
- Leave of absence for children of serving members of the Armed Forces.



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5. Additional Information

Murdishaw West will ensure that all parents/carers receive a copy of this Leave of Absence Policy which forms part of the school attendance policy.

- Parents/carers will be required to complete a leave of absence request form available from the school office and return it to school.
- Parents/carers may be required to attend an interview with the headteacher to discuss their request for a leave of absence.
- Parents/carers will normally be notified of the outcome of their application for a leave of absence within 10 school days of the date of the application.

If the leave of absence is not agreed by the school, but the pupil is absent on the requested dates, the absence will be recorded as 'G' this will mean that the absence has been recorded on the school attendance register as an unauthorised holiday.

Where a pupil is absent from school without permission of the school, the parent/carer of the pupil may be issued with a £60.00 Penalty Notice per parent per child. If the notice remains unpaid after 21 days, the penalty increases to £120.00. If the notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority may commence proceedings under section 444(1) of the 1996 Education Act in the Magistrates Court.

This policy after consultation with parents/carers and Governors will form part of Murdishaw West School attendance policy.