

  
Proud to be a Bright Futures EDUCATIONAL TRUST school

# **Marton Primary Academy and Nursery**



**Working Together To Be The Best We Can Be**

## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

Approved by the Governing Body 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023

# **MARTON PRIMARY ADCADEMY AND NURSERY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

**“Working together to be the best we can be”**

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# MARTON PRIMARY ACADEMY AND NURSERY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

**“Working together to be the best we can be”**

## INTRODUCTION

***‘Improving attendance is everyone’s business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundations of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.’***

**DfE Guidance ‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’  
From September 2022**

At Marton Primary Academy and Nursery, we recognise that for a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. Regular attendance is key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who reach their full potential.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, we expect all children on roll to attend every day and arrive on time, when the Academy is in session, if they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil’s absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child’s regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. We will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

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 development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our Academy a happy and rewarding experience for all children where all pupils feel valued and welcome. We reward those children whose attendance is very good and make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

## AIMS

- Promote good attendance.
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

- Promote and support punctuality.

## **LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES**

At Marton Primary Academy and Nursery we recognise that raising attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement.

This policy is supported by the following policies:

- Admissions
- Anti-Bullying
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Behaviour
- Special Educational Needs

This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order 2005 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

## **LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

This policy meets the requirements of the Department of Education (DfE) 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' 2022 and the statutory guidance on 'School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures' 2015. Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 18.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

Under The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016), schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of a morning session and then again at the start of an afternoon session. The register must record whether a pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present on an approved off – site educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

## UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the Academy (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good legitimate reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. The Academy has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the Academy to explain the absence.

Only the Academy can authorise an absence. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, all absences will be treated as **unauthorised** if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. This type of absence can lead to the Academy using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes (but not exhaustive):

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Non-emergency medical appointments such as dental check-ups which could be organised out of school hours.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time.

Our Academy will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents/carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Pupil Welfare Officer, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and support appropriately. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse or the Pupil Welfare Officer.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling during the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's education and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include allocation of additional support through the School Nurse or Pupil Welfare Officer. We may also use circle time, individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

The Governors, supported by the Trust and the LA, 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.

## **ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

**If a child is absent the parent/carers must follow the following procedures:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 8.45 a.m. The school office is manned from 7.30 a.m. and you will be able to leave a message on the school answering machine before this time.
- Or call into the Academy and report to the office in person.
- A note may be sent or contact made with the Academy prior to the day of absence e.g. if the child has an unavoidable medical appointment.

**If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher will take immediate action by notifying the school office. The Academy will then be in contact straight away with the parent/carers, in order to check on the safety of the child.**

**If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or member of the Senior Leadership Team if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Welfare Officer if attendance is a cause of concern.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless we have genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity is in doubt, parents / carers will be asked to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other form of appropriate evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the Academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/ carers notified.

## **LATENESS**

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils can also disrupt lessons, be embarrassing for the child concerned and encourage absence.

Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

### **How we manage lateness**

The school day starts at 8.30 am and we expect our children to be in the playground just before this time ready to enter the Academy when the doors are opened. Registers are marked by 8.45 am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. Children who arrive after 8.45 am enter via the main office and are recorded in a late book.

At 9.45 am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Our Academy rigorously monitors punctuality on a daily basis. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Pupil Welfare Officer and the Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016** make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and that it is for the Headteachers, not the parents, to determine the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Before any leave of absence can be considered, parents are required to make an appointment for interview with the Head of School to discuss their request. In making a decision, the school will consider the exceptional circumstances of each request for leave of absence individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time, the child's record of attendance including unauthorised absences and the pupil's stage of education and progress.

We will not agree a request for leave during term time under the following circumstances:

- When a pupil is just starting the Academy. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS) for Year 6 pupils.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below the Academy's target of 96%.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the Academy, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and will attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice for £120 (reduced to £60 if it is paid within 21 days).

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in prosecution under Section 44 of the Education Act 1996.

### **Holidays in Term Time**

Holidays in Term Time will not be authorised. Any holidays taken during term time will be classed as unauthorised. If a child has poor attendance for the current academic and/or for the previous academic year, a Penalty Notice will be issued.

If a child has good attendance for the current academic year and the previous academic year, the Local Authority will issue a 15-day penalty warning notice following their absence. This will result in a full Penalty Notice being issued should any further unauthorised absence be recorded.

### **Long-term absence due to medical needs / disabilities**

When children have a medical need / disability 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 schoolwork.

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

### **Religious Observance**

Marton Primary Academy and Nursery acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than two days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

### **Traveller Absence**

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from Traveller families whose families do not travel are expected to attend as normal and are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirements to attend regularly once registered.

Marton Primary Academy and Nursery will only authorise absence of Traveller children when satisfied that a family is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and has given indication that they intend to return.



Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school.
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service.
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced.

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

## **DELETIONS FROM THE REGISTER**

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- Transfer between schools.
- Failure to return from extended leave after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil.
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the Local Authority and school have tried to locate the pupil.
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil.
- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order.
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the Local Authority.
- Permanent exclusion has occurred, and procedures have been completed.
- Death of a pupil.
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system.
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team).

Marton Primary Academy and Nursery will follow Blackpool Children's Services Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

## **THE PUPIL WELFARE OFFICER (PWO)**

Parents/carers are expected to contact the Academy at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the Academy may refer the child to the Pupil Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. She will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the Academy or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the PWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the Academy and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

## **USING ATTENDANCE DATA**

Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action.

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

Marton Primary Academy and Nursery will share attendance data with the Department for Education as required.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home School Agreement sets out our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Explain to parents/carers at the pre-school induction meeting the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our weekly newsletters.
- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance be a cause for concern.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.
- Reward good or improving attendance through Marton Money, certificates and outings/events.

## **REWARDS FOR GOOD ATTENDANCE**

All the children who have 96+ per cent accumulative half termly attendance will receive a reward for attendance, awarded in assembly. All children who have improved attendance of 90+ per cent but below the Academy's target of 96 per cent accumulative half termly attendance will receive a certificate and a badge.

There are special certificates and medals for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year. Pupil Welfare supports 100% attendance in schools by organising an end of year celebration at Blackpool Football Club.

In addition, children are awarded one Marton Money token for each week of 100 per cent attendance and one Marton Money token for each week of 100 per cent

punctuality. These can be traded in each half term for prizes, kindly donated by our P.T.F.A.

All children who have 96+ per cent attendance for the whole year will be invited to attend a special end of year party held at the school.

## ATTENDANCE TARGET

The Academy's current target is to achieve 96+% overall attendance.

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance. The Head of School reports to Governors each term on attendance and punctuality levels and the impact of strategies employed. The Academy will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every three years, or earlier if considered necessary.

This policy will be reviewed in spring term 2026 or sooner should there be further changes in legislation to **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016)**.

Signature:



Date: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Mrs Trish Latimer  
Chair of Governors

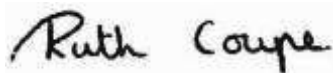
Signature:



Date: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Mrs Alice Coyle  
Head of School

Signature:



Date: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Mrs Ruth Coupe  
Executive Principal