

41. Attendance Policy



The British Muslim School

You are the best nation raised up for humankind. You enjoin righteousness, forbid corruption and you believe in Allah. Al- Quran, Surah Al-Imran, ayah 110

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Introduction

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

96%+ Excellent – Well done! This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.

94-95% Average – Well done, strives to build on this.

85-93% Poor – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. Please work with the school urgently to improve the situation.

Below 85% Unacceptable – Absence IS causing SERIOUS CONCERN. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. We will work with you to address this.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

a) In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.

Principles

Arrival and Registration

All children should be in the school ready to register at 8.45am each day although children are entitled to enter the classroom from 8.40am when doors open. The register is taken twice

a day. A day counts as 2 attendances. Morning registration ends at 8.45am. If a child arrives after the registration period, he must report to the school office and will be marked in as 'Late'. Arrival after 8.45am is recorded as an unauthorised late mark. However, those attending by transport their situation may be slightly different if there are reasonable circumstances.

Parental Responsibility

Throughout this policy the term 'parent' represents one parent, both parents, and carer with whom the child resides. Parents are informed of their responsibility to ensure their children attend regularly, in the school prospectus. Punctuality is also stressed as lateness impacts on learning not only for the individual, but the class as a whole. Attendance is discussed with each parent at consultation evenings, with the current percentage attendance being reported.

Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their children receive a full time education for Key Stage 3 and 4.

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 8.45 am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence.

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child.

- a) Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- b) An appointment card or verification by the doctor/ dentist/hospital is required.
- c) 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.
- d) If your child is absent due to vomiting then they should not return to school for the next 24 hours after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.
- e) For more than three days of absence the school require a written explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced.
- f) Medical certificates are required for absence greater than five days.

g) Parents must obtain a 'Pupil Pass', prior to a known absence, from school. This will provide parents with evidence that the school are aware of the absence in the event of being stopped in a 'truancy sweep'.

School Responsibility - THE LAW and School Attendance

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 restrict leave of absence for family holidays to 10 school days a year in special circumstances. The decision rests with schools, and families have no "right" to such leave. The application for leave must be made in advance by the parent of the pupil.

The Senior Leadership Team and all staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance.

Where school attendance problems occur, the school will endeavour to work with parents in the interests of the child to achieve a resolution.

It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice per day at the start of each session.

The Principal, not parents, authorises absence; The British Muslim School adhere to the DfE guidelines in authorising absence. Absence for any reason during term time is discouraged.

Absence known to be for the following reasons would be authorised:

- Illness
- Religious observance
- Attendance at medical appointments which cannot be made outside school hours

Family Holidays/ Absence during Term Time

The Governors recognise that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time.

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday, and by law, have to apply for permission in advance. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body and no more than one period of holiday of no more than ten school days in any academic year can be authorised. Holidays are not authorised in September or May.

When application is made for authorised absence during term time, the Principal gives consideration to:

- The age of the child
- The nature of the proposed absence
- The timing of the proposed absence
- The attendance pattern in the present and previous academic years. Absence will not be authorised where attendance is lower than 95% or where the absence would take attendance below 95%.
- The child's progress

Examples of what may constitute exceptional circumstances:

- To have a short absence to attend a family wedding, or a special family celebration (e.g. an 80th birthday of a grandparent); or to attend a special family reunion; or to attend a special religious/cultural festival, may constitute an exceptional circumstance.
- If a parent, due to the nature of their work, cannot possibly take time off during the regular school holidays, then this might constitute an exceptional circumstance. This will need to be evidenced by a letter from the employer. Factors indicated above will still be taken in to account.
- To have a week's winter or summer holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance

When an absence is authorised, parents will be provided with written evidence which can be presented in the event of being stopped as part of a truancy sweep.

Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either

AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone.

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 writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Principal.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'authorisation has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences that have never been properly explained.
- Holidays not agreed.

Penalty notices for absence from school can be issued by the Attendance and Behaviour Service based on requests from schools and the police.

The following circumstances are considered as appropriate reasons for the issuing of Penalty Notices:

- Truancy, including truancy sweeps
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Excessive holidays in term time
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed

A pupil has to be absent from school in one of these circumstances for at least 10 sessions in any term before the issuing of a Penalty Notice can be considered.

Following a request by the school for the issuing of a Penalty Notice a check is made by the Attendance and Behaviour Service that the request meets the conditions of the Code of Conduct. A warning letter will then be sent to parents explaining that unless their child attends full time for the next 15 days a Penalty Notice will be issued. Where a Penalty Notice is issued, each parent is required to pay a fine to the Local Authority.

Rewards

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.

Individual children

Certificates are awarded at the end of each old term for 100% attendance. This is celebrated in the final whole school assembly.

2 term – bronze

4 terms – silver

6 terms – gold

Individual Incentives

Where positive impact is required, all staff in contact with the child must take extra care to welcome the child each morning, praise punctual attendance and acknowledge the effort the child has made. It is also appropriate to recognise the effort the parent has made to secure the child's attendance.

Print Name (Chair of Governors): **M Rahman**

Responsibility for review: Principal (Child Protection)/ Governors