Mill Lodge Primary School

Attendance Policy 2025

Introduction and Background

At Mill Lodge Primary School, we recognise that positive behavior and good attendance are essential to raising standards in pupil attainment and to give every child/young person the best educational experience possible. Good attendance is everyone's responsibility.

It is well documented that children who attend school regularly have better outcomes in their attainment as well as their well-being and positive life experiences.

We know that pupils who attend school make significantly better progress in their learning. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and Maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% amongst those of the expected standard.

The Education Act 1996 (section 7) states
The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—
(a)to his age, ability and aptitude, and
(b)to any special educational needs he may have,
either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

(section 444) states
If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.

When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends that school regularly. This means your child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities: Working together to improve school attendance. Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

Promoting and maintaining excellent school attendance is a whole school responsibility and our policy details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved as well as the procedures that are in place to ensure and monitor regular pupil attendance. Our aim is to:

- promote a positive and welcoming environment where children feel safe, secure and valued

- promote and ensure children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled to enabling them to succeed both in school and in the future
- Raise awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently
- Provide help and support for pupils and families where there are barriers to school attendance

Who is Responsible for Attendance Issues in School

At Mill Lodge Primary School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing and work together to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils at our school.

The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school is:
Mrs Joanne Challender
office@mill-lodge.solihull.sch.uk
01214303010

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents/ carers should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:
Miss J Davenport
office@mill-lodge.solihull.sch.uk
01214303010

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents/ carers should contact for more individual support with attendance (Pastoral Support Worker):
Annette Jones
office@mill-lodge.solihull.sch.uk
01214303010

Procedures and Registers

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial to ensure safeguarding procedures are in place for children, for data analysis and to support statutory intervention, if necessary.

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately and in accordance with legislation.

Every half a day of absence from school (known as a session) is marked by the school as either authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence is where the head teacher has either given approval in advance for a pupil of to be absent or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence.

Unauthorised absences are absences which the school does not consider reasonable, exceptional, or unavoidable. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a **'persistent absentee'** when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will be likely to have a detrimental impact on your child's education and the school may follow attendance procedures if a child is classed as persistently absent.

Severe persistent attendance in school refers to a child who misses more than 50% of school sessions. It is highly likely that the LA's EPAS (education participation advisory service) service will be involved with a family at this point.

Procedures

If your child is absent from school you must:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 8.45am
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8.45am
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence

If your child is absent, we will:

- Contact you on the first and every subsequent day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- If we are unable to contact parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters/emails and a home visit may be made in the interests of safeguarding
- A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be "missing from education."

Requests for leave of absence (exceptional circumstances)

The law is very clear that you are not entitled to take your child on holiday during term time, and you are likely to be referred for legal action if you choose to do this.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances"

A leave of absence will not be granted in term time unless the reasons are deemed exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent/ carer removes a child when the application for leave was refused, or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice may be requested by this school in accordance with the Solihull Code of Conduct for issuing notices for school absence. A Penalty Notice may be issued where there have been at least 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence for the purpose of a holiday.

Procedure for Requesting a Planned Absence:

We will not authorise any leave of absence requests unless the circumstances are granted as exceptional. If you need to request this, complete an absence request form (Appendix A) and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the date required to give the school sufficient time to consider the request and respond. If we are aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed, appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer. There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of exceptional circumstances. The headteacher will consider requests for leave of absences and either authorise or unauthorise the leave of absence request. A letter confirming this will be sent to the parent/carer. (Please see Appendices B1-C for model pro-forma).
Leave that was taken which had not been granted will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupil's register. We may refer these absences to the Attendance Enforcement Team at Solihull MBC and this could result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

Deletion from School Roll

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 state that where a pupil has been granted extended leave of absence and subsequently fails to return to school within 10 school days of the expiry of the agreed period of absence, and the failure is not due to sickness or any other unavoidable cause, his/her name

may, following consultation with the Local Authority, be deleted from the admission register.

Absence Data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Improving Attendance

If we are concerned about your child's attendance, we will:

- Write to you if your child's attendance is a concern and falls below (suggest 95%), or where punctuality is a concern
- We will let you know how many days your child has been absent and compare this to persistent absence standards (19 days)
- Invite you into school to discuss the situation with our Headteacher if absences persist
- Create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance.
- Offer support via our pastoral team
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services if appropriate
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

Our aim is to work with you to address any reason for the absence and address issues early. We hope this early intervention will ensure that any issues are addressed quickly and successfully.

As Parents, you can support regaular school attendance by:

- Making sure your child leaves for school with plenty of time to ensure they are not late for school.
- Making medical appointments, such as dental/doctors appointents, outside school hours where possible
- Supporting and encouraging your child by attending parents evenings and other events.

- Contacting the school to discuss any concerns regarding thier child's attendance as soon as any issues arise.
- Working partnership with the school to resolve any issues that are impacting on your child's attendance.

Understanding Barriers to Attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, you as the parent/carer and the child. If as a parent /carer, you think their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with you and your family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain; however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

Local Authority Attendance Support Services

As a school, we are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

The Local Authority has an Attendance and EHE Advisory Team who work with schools, families, and other professionals, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

As a parent/ carer, you are expected to work with the school and the Local Authority to address any attendance concerns. You should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local

Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (see Solihull Code of Conduct for issuing notices for school absence), prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance. The school will endeavor, where possible, to solve attendance issues informally, before going down a formal / legal route.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can contribute to further absence. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed, miss vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at **8.45**am (9am nursery & ARC) when children can begin to come into school
- Registers are taken at 8.55am (9.10am nursery and ARC) and your child will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in by that time
- Children arriving after 8.55am (9.10am nursery and ARC) are required to come into school via the school office. If accompanied by a parent/carer they must sign them into our 'Late Book' and provide a reason for their lateness which is recorded
- At **9.10am (9.20am nursery and ARC)** 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 - 'U', but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding lateness

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with Mrs J Challender (Headteacher), but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time.

Promoting Good and excellent attendance.

As a school we will reward good attendance and improved regularly through reward schemes. Each term children that reach our school attendance target are entered into a raffle to win a school hoodie.

If you would like to discuss anything in this policy, please contact us at school to discuss further. Good attendance is everyone's responsibility and working together means issues are identified and addressed quickly and effectively. Good attendance means your child will have their best educational outcome.

The national framework for penalty notices for school absence in England:

- **Threshold**
  A penalty notice is considered when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (usually five school days) within a rolling 10 school week period.
- **Fine**
  The fine is £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.
- **Limit**
  A parent can only receive two penalty notices for the same child within a rolling three-year period.
- **Escalation**
  If a third or subsequent offense occurs within three years, other action must be taken, such as prosecution.
- **Local authority responsibility**
  Local authorities are responsible for deciding when to issue fines and for providing additional personnel support to schools.

APPENDIX - A

Mill Lodge Primary School

ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

Form to be returned to the school office with a minimum of two weeks notice

Please note that there is no automatic right for pupils to be granted leave of absence and requests will only be considered where there are exceptional circumstances.

Name of Pupil …… Date of Birth ……	Class ……
Please detail below the **exceptional circumstances** why you are requesting to take your child out of school. You may be invited into school to discuss your request with a member of the schools Senior Leadership Team. (Please attach any supporting evidence)	
Address ……	
Please enter below the dates of the requested absence. (first date of absence) ……/……/…… (last date of absence) ……/……/…… Number of school days that your child will be absent from school ……	
Signature …… Name of Parent/Carer ……	Date ……

Leave of absence which has not been agreed will be marked as unauthorised.
These may be referred to Solihull MBC for issuing a Penalty Notice.

For School Use:

Date received?			
Previous requests for leave of absence	Yes / No		
Evidence provided for exceptional circumstance	Yes / No		
Arrange to meet with Parent/Carer	Yes / No		
Head teacher decision to authorise	Yes / No	Code	

APPENDIX B - B1

Insert full Name of Parent Applying
Insert Full Address

Date:

Dear *(individual Parent),*

Child: **DOB:** **Class:**

Dates applied for: **to**

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request form dated.....in respect of the above Pupil.

On this occasion I am unable to authorise your child's leave of absence because .....

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that: If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s)/carers are guilty of an offence.

If you decide to go ahead with the proposed leave of absence, *(name of child)* absence of *(how many sessions)* will be marked in the register as unauthorised. These unauthorised absences are referred to Solihull MBC and this may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice of £160. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may lead to prosecution and a criminal record.

Please be aware that the statutory guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, states that if you have received 2 penalty notices in the last 3 years for the same child, a further penalty notice will not be issued and will be directed straight to court for prosecution.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

c.c. Class Teacher/File

APPENDIX B - B2

insert full Name of additional Parent
Insert Full Address

Date

Dear *(individual Parent),*

Child: **DOB:** **Class:**

Dates applied for: **to**

We have received a leave of absence request form dated …… from *(name of parent that applied)* in respect of the above child.

On this occasion I am unable to authorise your child's leave of absence because…

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that: If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s)/carer is guilty of an offence.

If you decide to go ahead with the proposed leave of absence, *(name of child)* absence of *(how many sessions)* will be marked in the register as unauthorised. These unauthorised absences are referred to Solihull MBC and this may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice of £160. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may lead to prosecution and a criminal record.

Please be aware that the statutory guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, states that if you have received 2 penalty notices in the last 3 years for the same child, a further penalty notice will not be issued and will be directed straight to court for prosecution.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

c.c. Class Teacher/File

APPENDIX B - B3

insert full Name of Parent Applying
Insert Full Address

Date

Dear *(individual Parent)*,

Child: **DOB:** **Class:**

Dates applied for: **to**

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request form dated.....in respect of the above Pupil. Unfortunately, you did not submit the form within the appropriate timeframe as per school`s attendance policy and therefore we have not been able to notify you prior to taking the leave that it would be unauthorised.

On this occasion I am unable to authorise your child's leave of absence because .....

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that: If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s)/carers are guilty of an offence.

Unfortunately you did not submit the form within the appropriate timeframe as set out in our schools Attendance Policy.

As you decided to go ahead with the proposed leave of absence without prior consent, *(name of child)* absence of *(how many sessions)* have been marked in the register as unauthorised. These unauthorised absences are referred to Solihull MBC and this may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice of £160. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may lead to prosecution and a criminal record.

Please be aware that the statutory guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, states that if you have received 2 penalty notices in the last 3 years for the same child, a further penalty notice will not be issued and will be directed straight to court for prosecution.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX B - B4

insert full Name of additional Parent
Insert Full Address

Date

Dear *(individual Parent),*

Child: **DOB:** **Class:**

Dates applied for: **to**

We have received a leave of absence request form dated ..... from *(name of parent that applied)* in respect of the above child. Unfortunately, this form was not submitted within the appropriate timeframe as set out in our schools attendance Policy and therefore we have not been able to notify you prior to taking the leave that it would be unauthorised.

On this occasion I am unable to authorise your child's leave of absence because .....

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that: If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s)/carers are guilty of an offence.

Unfortunately you did not submit the form within the appropriate timeframe as set out in our schools Attendance Policy.

As you decided to go ahead with the proposed leave of absence without prior consent, *(name of child)* absence of *(how many sessions)* have been marked in the register as unauthorised. These unauthorised absences are referred to Solihull MBC and this may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice of £160. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may lead to prosecution and a criminal record.

Please be aware that the statutory guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, states that if you have received 2 penalty notices in the last 3 years for the same child, a further penalty notice will not be issued and will be directed straight to court for prosecution.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX B -B5

insert full Name of parent applying for the LOA
Insert Full Address

Date

Dear *(individual Parent),*

Child: **DOB:** **Class:**

Dates applied for: **to**

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request form dated .....in respect of the above child.

Requests for leave of absence are given serious consideration I write to confirm that on this occasion I am able to authorise your child's leave of absence because..... In making this decision I have accepted your reason and evidence for the exceptional circumstances.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX C

insert full Name of individual Parent
Insert Full Address of individual Parent

Date

Dear *(individual Parent),*

Child: **DOB:** **Class:**

Re Leave of absences request for pupil detailed above

We have reason to believe that you have taken your child out of school without agreement of the head teacher during the period ..... to ....
I understand this absence was due to reason ..... as examples: (first day calling, social media, pupil information, EVIDENCE IS REQUIRED and a date it came to your attention needs to be provided

As stated in the school attendance policy and previous communications to parents, I am able to authorise absence only in exceptional circumstances. I do not believe that your reason amounts to an exceptional circumstance and I am therefore unable to authorise your child's absence.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that: If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s)/carers are guilty of an offence.

(pupil name) absence will be marked as unauthorised. These unauthorised absences are referred to Solihull MBC and this may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice of £160. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may lead to prosecution and a criminal record

If you wish to discuss this matter further please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher