



Attendance Policy

Last reviewed: September 2024

Vision Statement:

"We want each child to leave Markeaton with resilience, empathy, cultural awareness and confidence at the core of everything they do. We want our children to experience a challenging and immersive curriculum which will encourage them to become responsible and ambitious citizens of the future; looking back positively on their time at Markeaton."

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At Markeaton Primary School we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality. We aim to achieve or exceed 97% whole school attendance each school year.

Our School Day – Foundation Stage 2 (FS2)

- Main school gates open at 8.40am
- Children go straight into class from 08:45 and register taken in the classroom
- Children arriving between 8:55am and 9.10am will be marked as **late**
- Children arriving after 9.10am will be marked as **unauthorised late**
- Lunch is between 11:45am and 1.00pm
- Afternoon classes start at 1.00pm
- School ends at 3:20pm

Our School Day – Years 1 - 6

- Main school gates open at 8.40am
- Children go straight into class from 08.45 and register taken in the classroom
- Children arriving between 9.00am and 9.15am will be marked as **late**
- Children arriving after 9.15am will be marked as **unauthorised late**
- Lunch is between 12.00pm and 1.30pm (dependent on year group)
- Afternoon classes start between 1.00pm and 1.30pm (dependent on year group)
- School ends at 3:25pm

Absences:

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence.

When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used. Please see the key at the end of this policy for the different register codes.

Types of Absence:

Authorised Absence:

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence is **generally** authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness, medical or dental appointments (proof of medical appointment is required)
- Days of Religious Observance
- Exclusion
- Traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents' employment
- Family bereavement
- Involvement in a public performance
- 'Exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis)
- Approved sporting activity
- Non-Compulsory school age absence
- Educated off site

Unauthorised Absence:

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Absence should **not** be authorised in the following circumstances:

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, leisure activities, etc.)
- Family holidays (unless granted under 'exceptional' circumstances)

Persistent Absence:

Persistent absence (or PA) is when a child has absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

In instances of persistent absence, we will endeavour to support parents to improve their child/ren's attendance at school wherever possible. Parents/carers may be invited into to school to discuss their child/ren's attendance, concerns school or parents may have and ways in which we can work together to improve attendance in school.

Approved Educational Activity:

Children who are educated off site, dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises need not be marked as authorised absent and will be recorded as

being on an approved educational activity. This means that, for statistical purposes such as educational visits or approved sporting activities, the child can be counted as statistically 'present'. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded by use of the appropriate code. This is important in order to ensure that an accurate record of those children physically present on site at any given time is instantly available.

Registers:

We are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. Markeaton Primary School advises parents/carers to ensure that children are on the school premises by 8.50am and again by between 12.55pm and 1.25pm (dependent on year group and if they have been off site). Pupils arriving between 9.00am and 9.15am will be marked with an 'L' indicating they are late for school.

Pupils arriving after 9.15am will be registered with a 'U' showing they are present in school but were late enough to affect their learning.

Attendance data and data sharing:

Registers are legal documents. In considering attendance levels, the register is of paramount importance. Should a persistent non-attending pupil be identified, information regarding this pupil will be shared with Educational Welfare. This information will include the pupil's name, date of birth and address, along with, their parents'/carers' names and addresses. Should the parents of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements placed on schools regarding the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

The data which is extracted from accurate and up-to-date attendance registers will be used to support the more effective management of whole-school attendance matters. Such data can be used to:

- Support and underpin the target-setting process (for individual pupils, year groups, identified cohorts, the whole school) in relation to overall attendance and unauthorised absence on a termly and yearly basis
- Identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees
- Facilitate and encourage early intervention
- Identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism (for example, time lost to term-time holidays, regular absences on Mondays and/or Fridays, etc.); match attendance trends with attainment trends.
- Identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy
- Report attendance matters to parents

As a school we have a legal duty to accurately record pupils' attendance and share information with the Local Authority if a pupil's attendance gives cause for concern. Any information shared with the Local Authority will be done so through secure means and in accordance with the General Data Protection Act (GDPR) 2018.

Parents/Carers

We expect parents/carers to:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and on time.
- Ensure school have up to date contact information for emergency contacts

- Engage with school positively to reduce barriers to irregular attendance at school
- Notify school of their child's absence on each day of absence.
- Ensure, where possible appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Ensure that your child is collected from school on time at the end of each day. (3.20pm for FS2. 3.25 pm for year groups 1-6)
- Ensure that a Request for leave of absence is only made in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Ensure that any concerns that may affect your child's school attendance, are shared with the school.

Punctuality:

In addressing punctuality at Markeaton Primary School we:

- Clearly advertise times for the school day
- Publicise this policy in school and communicate it to parents/carers
- Balance any sanctions with positive encouragement
- Praise and acknowledge punctuality and improvements in punctuality
- Ensure that teachers set a good example by arriving punctually for registration and for lessons
- Follow up the reasons for lateness and are alert to any emerging patterns or problems

In cases of persistent lateness, we are committed to working with parents to help improve their child/ren's punctuality at school. When necessary, parents/carers may be invited to meet with school staff to discuss their child/ren's punctuality, any concerns the school or parents may have, and explore ways in which we can work together to overcome any barriers to irregular school attendance.

At Markeaton Primary School, we recognise the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in ensuring the best possible outcomes for all children. We also understand that families with children who have additional needs may face unique challenges in maintaining consistent attendance.

To support these families, we have a dedicated Attendance Officer and a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) who work closely with parents and carers. Together, they provide tailored assistance and guidance to help overcome any barriers to attendance and punctuality, ensuring that all children, regardless of their needs, have access to their education.

Leave of Absence:

There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time. Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the 'Application for Leave of Absence' form and any request can only be authorised where school accepts there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents/carers risk losing their child's place on the School Roll if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed date of return and re-admission cannot be guaranteed as defined in legislation: 'The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (amended 2013)'.

Leave of absence in term-time will never be authorised under the following circumstances:

- During the first term of the academic year as it is very important for the child to settle into their new class
- During an assessment/test period – e.g. Key Stage Two SATs
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence

All Leave of Absence Requests are evaluated on an individual basis, the Head Teacher will only consider authorising the request for leave if it is deemed to be an exceptional circumstance.

Please note: The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

Penalty Notices:

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

Parents commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised. A Penalty notices may be issued to a parent as an alternative to prosecution for irregular school attendance under s444 of the Education Act 1996.

From 19th August 2024 there will be a there will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence.

In cases of unauthorised leave of absence, warnings will be issued if sufficient notice of the intended absence has been provided. If sufficient notice has not been given or requested, a warning of a Penalty Notice may be issued upon the child's return.

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change parental behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being considered for the same parent a further penalty notice is unlikely to be the most appropriate tool. A limit of no more than 2 penalty notices being issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period will apply:

First Offence:

Parents may receive a Penalty Notice of up to £160 per parent, per child, for unauthorised leave of absence or irregular attendance. However, if the penalty is paid within 21 days, the amount is reduced to £80 per parent, per child. Failure to pay the penalty within 28 days may result in prosecution and conviction.

Second Offence (within three years):

The Second penalty notice will automatically charge at £160 per parent per child paid within 28 days. No discount will be offered. Failure to pay may result in prosecution and conviction.

Third Offence (within three years):

Any further offences (within a three-year rolling period) will be referred straight to the Magistrate Court. Which could mean:

- Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000
- Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 12 weeks imprisonment.

Absence for Religious Reasons:

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 3 days in any one academic year, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent is a member, and this will be marked as 'R' in the register. If parents require an additional day this must be requested in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').

Key:

Absence Code	Meaning
B	Educated off site
C	Other authorised circumstances
F	Agreed extended holiday
G	Family holiday not agreed
H	Family holiday agreed
I	Illness
L	Late before register closed
M	Medical/ dental appointment
O	Other unauthorised circumstances/ Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
U	Late after register has closed
V	Educational visit or trip
X	Non-compulsory school age absence

Y	Unable to attend school due to exceptional circumstances.

Review date – September 2026

Notes to consider:

Reporting to parents/carers – strategies for promoting attendance include; assemblies, rewards information to parents etc