



**MELLERS PRIMARY SCHOOL  
ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY  
February 2018**

## **Introduction**

The governors and staff recognise that good attendance and punctuality are two key issues which have a huge impact on children's achievements and progress in school. Irregular school attendance is a contributory factor in social exclusion and under-achievement. Pupils who fail to attend school regularly are more likely to be the victim of crime themselves or to become exposed to offending behaviours by others. Good attendance will be expected at all times from Foundation entry onwards. The school is always looking for ways to improve levels of attendance and reduce incidents of lateness.

## **Overall Aims**

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

## **Principles**

All members of staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring the attendance register is completed accurately and at the correct time.
- Following all procedures for attendance and registration.
- Providing a welcoming, secure, and inclusive atmosphere which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Regularly reminding children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- Establishing good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- Working with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- Discussing with parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly, during structured conversations and in CAF meetings

The deputy head teacher is responsible for:

- Overseeing the analysis of data and respond to findings.
- Meeting with office staff and the parent support worker to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- Liaising with external agencies such as the Education Welfare Service and make referrals where necessary.
- Ensuring that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Working with teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.

- Revising and amending the policy, as required.

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring the child attends school and is punctual each day.
- Promoting a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Keeping the school informed about the reason for any absence on first day onwards.
- Bringing to school any documents that support evidencing the absence, such as appointment cards, prescriptions, etc.
- Arranging medical and dental appointments out of school time.
- Working in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.
- Providing school with a current phone number and two alternative contact names and numbers
- Responding to school phone calls and text messages

Children are responsible for:

- Taking an increasing role in responsibility for attendance.
- Taking an increasing role in responsibility to get to school on time.

### **Celebrating good attendance and punctuality**

The school recognises that one powerful way of increasing attendance and punctuality is to ensure that it has a high profile in the school. We aim to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality (above 97%) through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

Activities include:

- Use of the Marvellous Me app to reward and celebrate individual improving attendance and punctuality
- One off fixed period incentives, including half termly class rewards
- 100% certificates
- Class incentives and rewards
- End of year 100% award and prize.
- Attendance raffle, with a large prize, such as a bike
- Weekly updates on the school newsletter

### **Attendance and Punctuality in the Foundation Stage**

Regular attendance is encouraged from the outset and will create good habits for the future. This early message, communicated to parents from the initial meeting, will set the expectations of the statutory requirements once the child is registered on roll at school, the term following their fifth birthday. The information regarding non-statutory attendance and punctuality is analysed in the same way as the rest of the school and every attempt will be made to address any concerns, initially in discussion with the parent/carer or by a home visit. Such intervention will be noted at school and confirmed in writing to the parent/carer.

If the child's attendance fails to improve and no satisfactory reasons have been given for the absences, an appointment will be made inviting parents to meet with the Head teacher or deputy

head teacher. **The responsibility for the children attending the provision is solely that of the parent/carer and the place could be at risk if a child does not access it regularly.**

### **Punctuality**

The school doors are opened at 8.40 am. The registration period is from 8.40 am until 8.50 am, when the registers will be closed. Registers will be sent through to the office at 8.50 am and any child arriving after this time must enter through the main entrance, where they will be marked as late (**L code**) and self-register using the electronic system. After 9.00 am, any child arriving late will be marked as unauthorised absence, (**U code**) due to the amount of learning time already missed. Families that choose to attend out of the catchment area are expected to attend punctually and are not exempt from the agreed sanctions. **Five unauthorised codes in two weeks is considered as persistent lateness** and will result in further actions, including penalty notices.

Parents / carers will be notified by text if the number of unauthorised absences, due to lateness, is nearing the trigger for a penalty notice. This is due to the time scales that could be involved, allowing for immediate response and improvement. A letter will be sent home if the child is late five times in two weeks, offering support to improve as necessary.

### **Absence**

Absences at school are of two types - authorised or unauthorised. All absences are unauthorised until a satisfactory reason for the absence is given, however **it is the school's responsibility and final decision to authorise any absence.** The only satisfactory reasons for absence are:

- Observance of a religious festival: pupils are allowed to take 2 days in total for Eid (1 day for Big Eid and 1 day for Little Eid) as authorised absence during the year. Any further absences over the Eid period would be recorded as unauthorised.
- Illness. Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. **If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them.** Regular illness may need to be substantiated by a medical certificate.
- If the child is prescribed a course of antibiotics, they should return to school after one or two days, timing medication around the school day or giving permission for a school adult to medicate.
- Children with identified medical conditions, who are regularly absent as a result, are asked to sign the medical contract. Whilst the absence is still legally recorded in the register, it is removed from in school monitoring, so the child can be rewarded for other good attendance and to prevent any inappropriate sanctions.
- Illness around a school holiday will not be authorised without medical evidence, such as an appointment card or prescription
- Attendance at a medical appointment must be authorised at the school office, whereby proof of the appointment must be shown e.g. doctor's medical card or letter, hospital appointment card or letter. Children should attend school before and after any appointment, reducing the time away from school. Wherever possible, these appointments should be made out of school time.

All other absences are unauthorised.

Mellers Primary School's aim is **97% attendance and above** for all pupils in the school. All children's attendance is monitored but when the **percentage attendance is below 90%, the child is considered a persistent absentee** and further investigation takes place. This can trigger further sanctions and is in line with Department for Education and Local Authority guidance.

When a child is absent from school, it is the parent's responsibility to let school know, either by phone call or text. If no message is received, the school will contact the family using all the phone numbers available. Home visits by two staff members may be completed if no contact has been made and the whereabouts and well-being of the child is unknown.

### **Penalty Notices**

If a child has unauthorised absence recorded, it may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

#### **Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:**

Penalty notices may be issued per parent, per child, who has unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

#### **Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:**

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- Parent includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.

**These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.**

### **Leave of Absence**

Head teachers **only grant five days leave** in term time, in one academic year, where **the circumstances are exceptional**, for example:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

Any family experiencing such exceptional circumstances should make any request for leave by completing a leave of absence form, available from school. This automatically triggers a meeting with the Head teacher. In that meeting the reasons for the leave are considered and discussed. Decisions and consequences regarding the request are made clear and put into writing, reinforcing and evidencing the discussion. **Absence due to leave in term time is at the discretion of the Head Teacher.** If leave is agreed, due to exceptional circumstances, evidence for this will be requested, such as tickets, booking forms, family documents and the child / children must return to school on the agreed date. Parents/carers are at risk of penalty notices and of losing the school place if they do not return to school on the agreed date.

If leave is not agreed by the Head teacher, the absence is recorded as unauthorised absence and a Penalty Notice will be issued to the parent by the Education Welfare Service. The child may be taken off the school roll and their school place lost. This will also apply if a child is absent due to leave that has not been requested or agreed. The following timeline is calculated as if the requested leave has been approved i.e. five days absence due to leave, ten days further absence triggers investigation and a letter, ten days further absence means that the child is removed from roll.

All request forms, meetings and correspondence are explicit about this policy. It is also available to parents in school brochures, newsletters and on the website at [www.mellersprimary.co.uk](http://www.mellersprimary.co.uk).

### **Children Missing in Education**

When a child is absent from school, it is possible that this is due to other behaviours or activities that places them at risk. At Mellers, we refer any child that we think should or may be removed from roll due to none attendance, whether the onward school is known or not. The referral is made to the Children Missing in Education department of the Education Welfare Service. After twenty days of absence and efforts by school and the Education Welfare Service to find the child, the Head teacher will make a decision about removal from the school roll. A "lost pupil" file is created on the national Lost Pupil's Database School to School, (S2S), to assist in locating them in the future.

### **Appendix of Letters**

- a. Leave request form
- b. Leave reply, approved
- c. Leave reply, refused
- d. Penalty notice information to parents
- e. Foundation Stage, attendance fallen below 90% (available to mail merge in SIMS)
- f. Medical contract
- g. Late, support letter (available to mail merge in SIMS)
- h. Falling attendance letter 90% - 93% (available to mail merge in SIMS)
- i. Persistent absentee letter, less than 90% (available to mail merge in SIMS)

# Mellers Primary School



## LEAVE REQUEST FORM

**To be completed by the parent/carer and returned to the School Office  
no less than 2 weeks before the intended leave**

I apply for my child to be granted approval for leave in term time during the academic year:

Full name of pupil \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of intended leave: from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

My child will return to school on \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leave in term time \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ parent/carer Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please note carefully:

- Only 5 days (one week) may be taken for leave during school time in a school year. We will only authorise if the circumstances are **exceptional**. Any other requests for more than 5 days for leave will be refused.
- Approval is not granted to pupils in the weeks of their SATs tests or the six weeks before this.
- If a pupil is taken out of school for leave without the school's prior approval the parent/carer may be liable for a penalty notice, the pupil may be taken off the school roll and their school place may be lost
- If the absence is longer than 5 days, or the child does not return to school on the date specified by the school the pupil will be taken off the school roll and their school place may be lost
- All requests will be considered in conjunction with the Education Welfare Service.

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Response slip to be completed by Headteacher and returned to parent/carer with letter confirming the school's decision:

Name of pupil \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

% attendance so far this year \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of intended leave \_\_\_\_\_

Leave approved    yes        no   

Headteacher's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Mellers Primary School

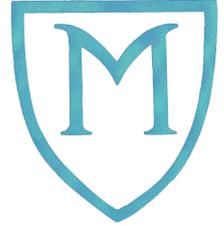
**Head Teacher: Amanda Dawson**

Norton Street, Radford, Nottingham NG7 3HJ

Telephone: School: (0115) 915 1796

E-mail [headteacher@mellers.nottingham.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@mellers.nottingham.sch.uk)

Website: [www.mellersprimary.co.uk](http://www.mellersprimary.co.uk)



Dear Parent/Carer

Re: application for leave for

Thank you for your application for leave, which has been approved. The dates you asked for are as follows:

Your child must return to school on:

On this occasion, your request for leave has been approved as your child's attendance is % which is above the required 97% and the circumstances for the leave are considered to be very exceptional. Please note however, that if your child does not return on the agreed date, any absence after this time will be recorded as unauthorised and a penalty notice will be issued. Your child may be removed from the school roll and will have to reapply for a school place. It is very important that your child attends regularly on return so that they do not fall further behind with their work.

Thank you for your continued efforts to maintain good attendance for your child.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Dawson  
Headteacher

## Mellers Primary School

**Head Teacher: Amanda Dawson**  
Norton Street, Radford, Nottingham NG7 3HJ  
Telephone: School: (0115) 915 1796  
Fax: (0115) 915 1795  
E-mail [headteacher@mellers.nottingham.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@mellers.nottingham.sch.uk)  
Website: [www.mellersprimary.co.uk](http://www.mellersprimary.co.uk)



23 June 2015

Dear parent/carer

Re: application for leave for

Thank you for your application for leave for the following dates:

Unfortunately, on this occasion your request has been refused as **(insert reason)**

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996).

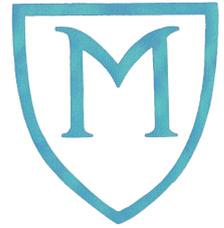
If you decide to take your child regardless of this decision the absence will be unauthorised. Any unauthorised absence has to be reported to the Local Authority and the Education Welfare Service may be asked to call at your home to discuss matters further. The Local Authority and Mellers Primary School Policy is very clear that a penalty notice will be issued per parent per child for absence due to unauthorised leave.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Dawson  
Headteacher

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23 June 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

As a result of your child's unauthorised absence, marked with the code 'U' or 'G' on the registration certificate enclosed, we have started the process of a penalty notice, as outlined in the Local Authority and Mellers Primary School Attendance Policy.

This is a fine of at least £60 per parent per child. There is also a risk that [insert child's name] may be removed from the school roll and will have to reapply for a school place.

It is very important that your child attends regularly on return so that they do not fall further behind with their work.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Dawson  
Headteacher

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23 June 2015

Dear Parent/Carer,

After a recent review of the registers at Mellers Primary School, concerns were raised over [insert child's name] school attendance. [insert child's name] has attended less than 90% which is automatically investigated by the Education Welfare Service.

Although [insert child's name] is not yet legally of statutory school age, regular attendance at school is a practice Mellers Primary and the Education Welfare Service actively encourage.

The school and the Education Welfare Service work very closely together to encourage parents/carers with children in the Foundation Stage, to adopt good attendance and punctuality routines early on in a child's school life. Therefore, when they do eventually become statutory school age, they will be familiar with the routine.

Once your child starts in our reception class you are legally responsible for ensuring he/she attends school regularly and on time. Failure to ensure this will result in further action being taken against you through the Magistrate's Court. At present a penalty notice of at least £60 is issued per parent per child.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Patel or any of the Foundation Stage staff should you wish to discuss this letter or any issue that may be affecting your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

**Laura Patel**  
**Deputy Head Teacher**

# Mellers Primary School

Head Teacher: Amanda Dawson  
Norton Street, Radford, Nottingham NG7 3HJ  
Telephone: School: (0115) 91 51796  
Fax: (0115) 91 51795  
E-mail headteacher@mellers.nottingham.sch.uk  
Website: www.mellersprimary.co.uk



23 June 2015

## Attendance / Punctuality Contract

At Mellers Primary we recognise the good work that our families do to get their children to school on time, every day. Children get certificates and rewards and parents are informed through general newsletters and personal letters in the post.

However, as a result of circumstances beyond their control, it would be impossible for some children to achieve 100% attendance throughout their school life. In the main these circumstances relate to acute, diagnosed medical conditions. This contract will support the child to get recognition of good attendance and prevent inappropriate investigation or communication. We ask parents to sign this agreement and adhere to it.

Name of child.....

Medical condition .....

Doctor / clinic involved .....

.....  
.....  
.....

As the parent / carer of.....

I will:

- Make every effort to make appointments out of school times and if not attend school before or after these appointments
- Let school know of appointments and hospital stays well in advance
- Provide medical documentation of these appointments, etc.
- Sign the appropriate forms to allow school professionals to medicate in school time
- Ensure that medical professionals contact school with information / communication, especially hospital school
- Attend hospital school or ask school for a work pack to be sent home for an absence longer three days is anticipated.
- Negotiate with school a part time timetable should a full day of school be inappropriate
- Continue to send my child to school on time, every day for the rest of their school time

Signed..... Date.....

The school will:

- Complete registers with the appropriate codes
  - M medical appointment
  - I illness
  - B educated off site (if at hospital school)
  - C other authorised circumstances
- Analyse data with this information in mind, when calculating percentage attendance and organising rewards, letters, etc.
- Inform Education Welfare Service about this contract
- Inform the school nurse of this contract and offer further support for you and your child.
- Arrange work packs for children to complete whilst absent due to their medical condition

Signed..... Date.....

The child will:

- Come to school every day, on time
- Complete work set by school or at the hospital school
- Be aware of their medical conditions and tell school adults their needs.

Signed..... Date.....

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«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

I am writing due to our concerns regarding the punctuality of your «son\_daughter», «chosen\_forename». Our records to date show that «he\_she» has been late to school «total\_lates\_both» times.

I can confirm that classroom doors open at 8.40a.m this allows the children time to arrive in their classroom ready for starting to learn at 8.45a.m. It is extremely important that your child arrives on time, being late has a negative impact on their learning outcomes. Children arriving in their classrooms late also disrupt other children's learning.

I have to remind you again that if «chosen\_forename»'s punctuality does not improve we will refer the case to the Education Welfare Service. In order to prevent further action, which could include a fine of up to £60 per child per parent, please make sure that your child arrives at «his\_her» classroom by 8.45a.m. every day.

Yours sincerely

**Senga Cannop**  
**Family Support**

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23 June 2015

«address\_block»

Dear «salutation»,

I am writing to you to make you aware of your child, «forename»'s, attendance percentage. In a recent review of registers, the overall rate of attendance has fallen below 93% and is falling close to 90%, it is at this point further investigation and monitoring begins.

We recognise that there are very genuine reasons for these absences and we thank all parents who tell us why their children are away or late for school.

However, even with this information, we have to enforce the local authority and Mellers Primary School policy which is available on our website. This policy is overseen by the Education Welfare Service, and aims to increase percentage attendance, in particular for children with less than 90%.

Please continue to make every effort to get your child to school on time, every day. If you are concerned about attendance or need any advice/support please contact me at school on the above number.

Yours sincerely

**Laura Patel**  
**Deputy Head Teacher**

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23 June 2015

«addressee»

«address\_block»

Dear «salutation»,

We are writing to you concerning your child «chosen\_forename»'s attendance record. Your child's overall percentage, so far this school year is «percentage\_attendance»%. Children with less than 90% attendance are considered to be persistent absentees, and we are required by law to investigate this further.

We recognise that there are very genuine reasons for these absences and we thank all parents who tell us why their children are away or late for school.

However, even with this information, we have to enforce recommended practice from the Education Welfare Service, to try to increase the attendance percentage, in particular for children with less than 90%. Please see our Attendance Policy available on our website at: [www.mellersprimary.co.uk](http://www.mellersprimary.co.uk)

Due to the serious nature of this letter please continue to provide medical evidence if your child is ill for more than one day. This will allow us to authorise the absence, as it is unauthorised absences that will lead to penalty notices and further legal action.

Thank you for working with us and for your support with this concern.

Yours sincerely

**Laura Patel**  
**Deputy Head Teacher**