



Admissions, Attendance and Children Missing from Education Policy

This policy also applies to the EYFS

Related documents Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

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Contents

| | | |
|------|--|---|
| 1 | Introduction | 3 |
| 2 | Admission of pupils | 3 |
| 2.1 | Deleting a pupil from the Admissions Register | 4 |
| 3 | Attendance..... | 5 |
| 3.1 | The legal framework | 5 |
| 3.2 | Link between attendance and achievement | 5 |
| 3.3 | Parent/carer(s) responsibilities..... | 5 |
| 3.4 | School responsibilities | 5 |
| 3.5 | Good attendance | 6 |
| 3.6 | Late arrival..... | 6 |
| 3.7 | Leaving school early during the day | 6 |
| 3.8 | Requests by parent/carer(s) for absence from school | 7 |
| 3.9 | Persistent absentees | 7 |
| 3.10 | Maintaining records and reporting to the authorities | 7 |
| 3.11 | Monitoring and reviewing arrangements..... | 7 |
| 4 | Children Missing from Education | 8 |
| 4.1 | Introduction | 8 |
| 4.2 | Statutory guidance | 8 |
| 4.3 | School requirements | 8 |
| 4.4 | Safeguarding | 8 |
| 5 | Elective Home Education (EHE)..... | 8 |

1 Introduction

Maltman's Green School maintains its Admissions and Attendance Registers in accordance with Statutory Regulations, as amended from time to time. The School refers to the DfE guidance, Children Missing Education – Statutory guidance for local authorities September 2016, found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

The School also pays due regard to the DfE's non statutory guidance in relation to wider attendance issues described in Working Together to Improve School Attendance May 2022, found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

The School will work in a collaborative way with external agencies, in accordance with the principles of Working Together to Safeguard Children. The purpose of this policy is to outline the approach taken to:

- record information at the point a pupil is admitted to the School;
- record attendance information on a daily basis;
- record information at the point a pupil leaves the school; and
- manage a situation when a pupil is deemed missing from education.

2 Admission of pupils

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education. The name of a pupil is included in the register from the beginning of the first day on which the School has agreed, or has been notified, that the pupil will attend the School. For most pupils the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the School year. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

For each pupil, the Admissions Register contains:

- Name in full.
- Sex.
- Name and address of every person known to the School to be a parent of the pupil (and an indication of which parent the pupil normally lives with and which parents hold parental responsibility as defined by Section 3 Children Act 1989). Note: parents holding parental responsibility, even if not actually caring for the child, have a right to receive relevant information from the School in respect of any pertinent matter affecting the child, unless a court order indicates otherwise. Where a parent notifies the School that a pupil will live at another address, in addition or instead, the new address, the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will normally live with in future and the date from which it is expected the pupil will normally live there, is recorded where it is reasonably practicable for the School to ascertain this information.

- At least two emergency contact numbers for pupils with two or more parents, i.e. one per parent or at least two emergency contact numbers for children with single parents (where possible).
- Day, month and year of birth.
- Day, month and year of admission or re-admission to the school.
- Name and address of the school last attended, if any.
- The name of the destination school (or additional school, in the case of dual registration) notified by a parent and the first date of attendance, where it is reasonably practicable for the School to ascertain this information.

Our school's admission register is accurate and kept up to date by our Registrar.

Parents/carers must inform school if there are any changes to a pupil's living arrangement. Maltman's Green School has a mandatory duty to inform the local authority, via the First Response Team, if a child under the age of 16 years old lives with someone other than their parent, step-parent, aunt, uncle or grandparent for a period of more than 28 days. This is defined as being a private fostering arrangement.

2.1 Deleting a pupil from the Admissions Register

The lawful grounds for removing a pupil and the information to be reported to the local authority, are set out in detail in Children Missing Education (DFE, 2016 and School Attendance 2022).

The School informs our local authority (Buckinghamshire) when a pupil's name is going to be deleted from the Admissions Register on certain grounds. In summary, these are:

- when the child has been taken out of school to be home educated;
- when the family has apparently moved away;
- when the child has been certified as medically unfit to attend;
- when the child is in custody for more than four months; or
- when the child has been permanently excluded.

The School will notify our local authority when we add or remove a pupil's name from/to the Admissions Register at non-standard transitions as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. i.e. where a compulsory school-aged child leaves a school before completing the school's final year or joins a school after the beginning of the school's first year. Maltman's Green School also recognises it is under a duty to provide information to the local authority for standard transitions if requested.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the School and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the School does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

3 Attendance

It is important that staff, parents and pupils are familiar with this policy. Maltman's Green School monitors pupil attendance through our daily register. Regular school attendance from an early age creates a culture promoting the importance of education and learning so that all can benefit equally. Missing learning time leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and it is well known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the School, parents and the child, beginning from the Early Years.

3.1 The legal framework

- Legislation specifies the legal responsibility of parent/carer(s) of statutory school age children to ensure they attend school. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient full-time education which is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs; either by regular school attendance or education otherwise such as home education.
- The same law requires the School to have an Admissions Register and an Attendance Register, and to place all children on both registers. Failure to do so is an offence. The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2023) requires a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises and their hours of attendance.

3.2 Link between attendance and achievement

There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement, as well as a strong link between truancy and antisocial behaviour.

3.3 Parent/carer(s) responsibilities

- Encourage regular and punctual attendance, being fully aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that the child in their care arrives punctually, prepared for learning.
- Provide clear reasons for any absence which ensures the School can code the absence properly and accurately.
- Contact the School on the first day of the child's absence as early as possible and preferably before the start of the School day.
- Avoid making arrangements to remove children from school during term time for example for family holidays
- Respond helpfully and positively to any enquiry made by the School to ascertain the reason for any absence, including any safeguarding matter.

3.4 School responsibilities

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (deemed as attendance at 90% or below).
- Work to ensure every girl has good attendance so she can access the education to which she is entitled, acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Encourage parents to ensure their daughter attends all learning opportunities regularly and punctually.
- Keep accurate and efficient records of attendance and registration at school, including attendance at all after school and before school activities.

We achieve this in the following ways:

- Teachers always take a register at least once in the morning and once in the afternoon.
- Absent pupils are marked as not present by the designated time, taking account of absence notes.
- Un-notified first-day absences are followed up with a telephone call by the School office to the parent/carer(s).
- Attendance and lateness are monitored. Strategies are implemented for promoting improved awareness of attendance such as year groups or vulnerable children, as required, including the use of formal letters home
- The Attendance Registers are regularly scrutinised by the Deputy Head Pastoral (who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead), who follows up any concerns with parents.
- Attendance is a standing agenda item on half termly SLT meetings.
- Patterns of attendance are reported at Governance Meetings to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- Persistent absences are specifically monitored (individual attendance below 95%).
- The School will properly use the DfE national codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations, including preservation of the entries on both the Admissions and Attendance Registers for a period of three years after it was made.
- Only the Headmistress or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will identify children causing concern, and where necessary interview children and parents regarding any unsatisfactory attendance.
- The SLT and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will liaise closely where there are concerns of children being missing from education – see Section 4 of this document, and implement any agreed improvement strategies such as referral to the local authority attendance services and/or children's social care in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- The School will provide parent/carer(s) with the timings of the School day and the calendar via the School's Parent Portal and their website and any other usual methods such as email, in advance.

3.5 Good attendance

Our school considers good attendance to be that above 95%, poor attendance is considered to be between 90%-95% and persistent absence below 90% (see paragraph 3.9).

3.6 Late arrival

It is essential that, if a pupil arrives late, they should sign in at the School office so our systems remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the School is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every pupil is at all times.

3.7 Leaving school early during the day

Pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the School day, unless accompanied by a member of staff or their known parent/carer, or to attend a school visit, or a sporting fixture.

If a pupil has to leave the School during the day for illness or a parent is required to collect her for a medical appointment, they are required to sign out at the School office. Where there are known medical appointments, parents must notify the School in advance.

3.8 Requests by parent/carer(s) for absence from school

The School, not parents, authorise absence. Requests to the School for granting permission for leave of absence to a pupil during term time must be made in writing in advance directly to the Headmistress. The Headmistress is only able to authorise leave of absence where exceptional circumstances relate to the application. The School will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance on a day that is exclusively recognised by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, the School may seek confirmation from that religious body. Authorised absence will be granted for compassionate reasons such as a serious family illness or bereavement. Authorised leave is unlikely to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

Parents are requested to make contact with the School when their daughter is going to be absent for ill health reasons in order that the School can keep records updated and importantly, so that the School can be kept informed of her progress to full health and anticipated return date. If necessary, the School may ask for medical evidence of any illness. We expect any absence for illness to be evidenced by a note from the parent/carer(s) as soon as possible.

An absence is classified as unauthorised if a child is away from School without the permission of the Headmistress in advance.

If a child is absent from school during term time, the School is unable to provide any work that is being covered in class whilst the child is away. The only exception to this is if a pupil has an illness and is essentially well but is not allowed to attend school on the instructions of a doctor and this is specified in a doctor's note. We would then endeavour to send suitable work home, though it may not be exactly what is being taught at school.

3.9 Persistent absentees

Persistent absentees are those pupils with attendance at 90% or below. The School will contact the parent/carer(s) if their child's attendance approaches this threshold. If attendance does not improve, the School will contact the local authority in accordance with local authority procedures.

3.10 Maintaining records and reporting to the authorities

The School's Attendance Register, kept by means of a computer, is backed up in the form of an electronic copy at least once a month.

3.11 Monitoring and reviewing arrangements

Attendance levels are reported regularly to the School's Safeguarding Governor and to the Board of Governors who scrutinise them for compliance and safeguarding purposes. In addition to regular follow up of attendance concerns made by the Deputy Head Pastoral, concerns raised at the half termly SLT meeting regarding a child's attendance that is 95% or below will be followed up by the Deputy Head Pastoral in the first instance to discuss these concerns, contacting the parent/carer as required.

4 Children Missing from Education

4.1 Introduction

Children missing from education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

Children missing from education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

4.2 Statutory guidance

The school will follow the statutory guidance 'Children Missing from Education 2021'.

4.3 School requirements

- The School enters pupils on the Admissions Register at the beginning of the first day on which the School has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the School. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the School will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish child's whereabouts and consider notifying our local authority at the earliest opportunity.
- Schools must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. The School will inform Buckinghamshire local authority of the details of any of our pupils who fail to attend regularly, or have missed ten consecutive school days or more without permission. The School will monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority. Any pupil whose absence is causing concern and where it has not been possible to make contact with a parent/carers, will be reported as a Child Missing in Education (CME) using the **Buckinghamshire CME Protocol**.

4.4 Safeguarding

- The School has a safeguarding duty in respect of our pupils, and as part of this will investigate any unexplained absences.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns about any child, the School will always follow its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures, which includes reporting to the local authority.
- Any absence, of a pupil who is currently subject to a child protection or child in need plan will be immediately referred to their social worker.

5 Elective Home Education (EHE)

Many home-educated children have an overwhelmingly positive learning experience. We would expect the parents' decision to home educate to be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision. However, this is not the case for all, and home education can mean some children are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs.

From September 2016 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended so that schools must inform their LA of all deletions from their admission register when a child is taken off roll.

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove their daughter from Maltman's Green School with a view to educating her at home, we will work with our Buckinghamshire local authority and other professionals to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. Ideally, we would attempt to set this before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of their daughter. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker.

DfE guidance for local authorities on Elective Home Education (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education>) sets out the role and responsibilities of LAs and their powers to engage with parents in relation to EHE. Although this is primarily aimed at LAs, at Maltman's Green School we are aware of this guidance.