



## **Monkfrith School Attendance Policy**

At Monkfrith, we believe that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that: “The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –
  - to age, ability and aptitude, and
  - to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”
  - Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
  - Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
  - Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
  - Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.

### **1. Principles**

- It is important that all parents, carers and pupils know that good attendance and punctuality is vital in ensuring educational progress.
- It is important that all parents, carers and staff are aware of their responsibilities with regard to the attendance of pupils.

### **2. Purpose**

- To improve and maintain good levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To minimise disruption to the learning environment caused by lateness and absence.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Parents and Carers**

- Parents and carers have the responsibilities to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time.
- Parents and carers will contact the school as soon as a pupil is absent (and provide evidence where applicable).
- Parents and carers must seek permission from the Headteacher before taking any Exceptional Leave of Absence and be aware that they may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice where permission has not been sought or given.
- Parents and carers will provide evidence to support an application of Exceptional Leave or, where there is doubt about absence provide evidence so that it may be authorised.

#### **Pupils**

- Pupils will be made aware of the importance of regular attendance at school.
- Pupils will be encouraged to talk to a member of staff if there is anything which makes them feel unhappy at school and could reduce their willingness to attend.

## **School**

- The School will ensure that registers are kept accurately as they are legal documents.
- All absences will be followed up by the school office promptly and a decision is made in collaboration with the Headteacher as to whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.
- Parents and carers will be notified by letter where levels of absence become of concern.
- Where absence continues to be of concern, the Headteacher or Deputy will meet with parent and carers to identify and resolve issues contributing to poor attendance.
- The Education Welfare Team will be notified where attendance continues to be of concern, despite measures being taken by the school.
- Pupils missing from school for a period of 10 days with no explanation will be referred to the Education Welfare Team using the 'Child Missing from School' referral form
- Pupils who are missing from school for a period of 5 consecutive days, who have failed to return from an extended leave of absence or who are no longer able to travel to school will be referred to the Education Welfare Team using the 'Child Missing from School' referral form.
- Fixed Penalty Notices will be applied for where pupils have taken an unauthorised leave of absence or leave/return to school on a date different to term dates.
- The school will promote regular attendance.
- Parents and carers will be updated when there are changes to attendance legislation.
- Attendance and punctuality figures and patterns will be continually monitored.
- Attendance reports will be shared with Governors.

## **Education Welfare Officer**

The Education Welfare Officer comes to the school two times a year and is purchased through Barnet Traded Services.

- The Education Welfare Officer will assist the school in identifying poor or potentially poor patterns of attendance.
- The Education Welfare Officer will advise the school on appropriate strategies to use with pupils and their families where school attendance is a matter of concern.
- The Education Welfare Officer will assist those families who are experiencing difficulties with school attendance, where measures taken by the school have failed to effect change.
- The Education Welfare Officer will support staff in the development of whole school approaches to maintain and develop excellent attendance and punctuality.
- The Education Welfare Officer will receive referrals about pupils who are missing from school for a period of 10 days with no explanation.
- The Education Welfare Officer will receive referrals about pupils who are missing from school for a period of 5 consecutive days, who have failed to return from an extended leave of absence or who are no longer able to travel to school.

### **4. Attendance monitoring procedures for non-statutory school age children**

- Attendance for non-statutory school age children is not compulsory and the Education Welfare team will not undertake legal proceedings where there are high levels of absence.
- We will however, follow up absences for pupils of non-statutory school age and record these on the management system.
- We will promote the importance of good school attendance at the intake meetings for Reception.

### **5. Exceptional Leave of Absence**

Barnet Council and Monkfrith strongly discourage absence from school unless absolutely essential, in order that learning potential is maximised.

- Families must apply to the school in advance for permission to take their child away from school.
- Families will not be granted time off for holidays during term time.
- Families applying for Exceptional Leave will be asked to complete a form which will be reviewed by the Headteacher who will respond in writing.

The Headteacher will have discretion to grant up to 10 days Exceptional Leave if she/he believes the circumstances warrant it. For example:

- For religious reasons
- A bereavement of immediate family
- A circumstance supported by documentation e.g. medical evidence.

The Headteacher will also consider:

- The circumstances involved
- The time and length of the proposed leave
- The pupil's previous attendance history
- Any previous requests

#### **6. Failure to return from Leave**

Where a pupil fails to return after the expected return date the Headteacher may take steps to remove the pupil from the school roll.

- The Headteacher will ensure that there was no good reason for the pupil's absence, such as disrupted travel arrangements or illness, before deleting the pupil from the school roll.
- If the pupil has a good reason to be absent he/she will be marked authorised absence using the relevant code.
- The Headteacher and Educational Welfare Team will make reasonable enquiries to locate the pupil.
- If the pupil is located, the school will take steps to address the reasons for the pupil's failure to attend, accessing support from other agencies where appropriate.
- The school will follow advice from the Education Welfare Team.

#### **7. Fixed Penalty Notices**

A Fixed Penalty Notice is a fine issued by the Local Authority to parents / carers who take their child on holiday or out of school during term time without the express consent of the school.

Such fines are referred to the Educational Welfare Team who may impose a fixed penalty fine:

- £60 per parent / carer if paid within 21 days.
- Rising to £120 per parent / carer for each child if paid within 28 days (Anti-social Behaviour Act 1996/2003)
- If the notice remains unpaid after the 28th day, the Local Authority prosecutes the parents / carers in a Magistrates court for the original non-attendance offence under The Education Act 1996, Section 444, and not for non-payment of the penalty notice.
- If found guilty, parents / carers will have a criminal record, possibly receive a fine (up to £1,000 for a first offence) and be required to pay costs to the Local Authority.

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

It is due for review September 2023

## **COVID 19 Attendance Policy Addendum**

Government guidance states that all pupils in all year groups will return to school full time in Autumn.. At Monkfrith we will continue to promote good attendance enabling all pupils to achieve well. Absence from school remains detrimental to a child's education.

Attendance is compulsory for all year groups from September 2020. It is parents' duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly. It is our aim that students should have attendance above 96%

- Parents should inform the school of any absences in accordance with the attendance policy.
- If a student is displaying one or more of the symptoms of Covid-19 on the NHS website they should not attend school. Parents/guardians should inform the school immediately and arrange a test. They should self-isolate until they receive the test result. Their family should also self-isolate. If the test is negative and they are no longer displaying symptoms they can return to school as normal. If the test is positive they must self- isolate for at least 10 days or until they no longer have symptoms. Their families should self-isolate for 14 days.
- Following a positive test of a child or adult within school, it may be necessary to isolate a class or year group. This will be done under the guidance of Public Health.
- From 1st June if a student did not attend school despite not being ill, self-isolating or shielding all absences were recorded as authorised. This is no longer the case from September as it has been deemed safe for schools to re-open fully to all students. Any such absences will be recorded as unauthorised and all procedures in the full attendance policy will be followed.
- Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.
- If in future, rates of the disease rise locally, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high. Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents should share this with the school. Schools should contact parents of pupils who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school.
- It is the school's responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence in accordance with the attendance policy.

### **Attendance codes:**

- Where an absence is for self-isolation due to coronavirus an X code will be used. This is an authorised absence but does not count to the overall attendance figures.

### **Remote education:**

- Where it is necessary for a student to shield or self-isolate they will be given access to remote education where possible. Please refer to the Remote Learning Strategy.