



Merrydale Junior School

Attendance/Extended Holiday Policy

2021-2022

Policy Date:	September 2021	Version: 1.1	
Policy Review Date:	September 2022	Catrina Mugglestone	<i>C Mugglestone</i>
Ratified by Governing Body:			
Lesley Butcher		<i>Lesley Butcher</i>	

Attendance and absence

At Merrydale Junior School we work in partnership as a community to create a learning environment where everyone is valued, cared for and encouraged to “Be the best they can be”. The school has a major role in monitoring levels of attendance and punctuality and in creating the appropriate foundation in the school to nurture regular attendance and excellent timekeeping all of which the school believes promotes a basis for each child to achieve their potential. We take our responsibilities seriously and carefully record all absences and lateness.

Parents/carers are requested to contact the school on the first day of absence to advise of the reason and expected return date. This can be done either by personal call, email, telephone message or by sending a note with another child. If the school has not been notified of an absence by 9.15am the Family Support Worker will telephone to be reassured that the child is safe and with a responsible adult. If we get no reply and there are concerns about a child’s welfare, this will be followed up by a text message and contacting the relevant authorities.

Only the school can approve an absence, and the fact that a parent has offered a notification about the reason does not oblige the school to accept explanation offered as valid.

Medical appointments such as visits to the doctor, dentist, opticians, illness etc. can be authorised on presentation of appropriate evidence. If this is not provided then the absence will be an unauthorised absence.

If a child has medication due to illness it does not necessarily mean that the child needs to be absent whilst the course of medication is completed. Designated first aid staff are able to administer prescribed medication with parent/carer consent. Staff are not permitted to administer medication that has not been prescribed although a parent/carer is welcome to visit to administer such medication during the school day.

The Family Support Worker monitors attendance closely in conjunction with other staff members; any irregular attendances or children who are away from school for more than a week through illness or hospital attendance are brought to the attention of the Headteacher and are also discussed with the LA Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who visits the school monthly or more frequently if required. The school’s EWO is a key partner in supporting the school in this area and the regular meetings with the Family Support Worker enable the school to seek further advice and guidance as required.

Following these discussions, all children who are identified as a concern in terms of attendance are notified to the Headteacher. These are usually children with attendance levels less than 95%. The Family Support Worker, after further consultation with the relevant member of staff, may contact the parents/carers of the child/children concerned.

Punctuality and Collection

The school day starts at 8.45 am and ends at 3.20 pm

Registers open at 8.50 am and close at 9.05 am

It is a parent/carer responsibility to ensure that children arrive and are collected promptly at the end of the school day. Children who are late for the start of the school day not only miss valuable learning time but also disrupt the education of other children in their class.

Children arriving late should enter the school via the office. Parents/carers are required to sign the child in using the electronic system at the office, give the time of arrival and reason for the lateness. This also ensures an accurate record of who is in the building should there be a need to evacuate the premises.

The registers close 20 minutes after the start of the school day. Lateness before the registers close will be authorized (L code) and lateness after the registers close will be coded as unauthorized (U code). It is important to note that U code is an unauthorized absence this can trigger formal action via Education Welfare Service (EWS).

Religious Observance

The absence of a child for one day set aside exclusively for religious observance, when the festival falls on a school day, is classified as an unauthorized absence (R code). Parents/carers need to request the leave in writing in advance. It is not for the school to assume which pupils are participating in religious observance.

Leave of absence requests

Parents/carers seeking permission for term time absence are required to complete an absence request form in the first instance. The form is available from the office. This will be considered by the Headteacher, who will consult with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and governors.

The Headteacher is not able to authorise leave of absence unless both of the following apply:

- a) An application has been made in advance by the parent/carer AND
- b) The Headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Requests for compassionate leave will be judged on an individual case basis and may be discussed with the EWO.

If your child has unauthorized leave of absence (G code) you may either be issued with a Penalty Notice of £120 per parent per child (discounted to £60 if paid within 21 days) or your case could be referred, by the Local Authority, directly to the Magistrate Court.

If a child is absent and no leave of absence form has been completed the school may request a home visit be undertaken by the EWO. Alternatively, parents/carers may be sent a letter asking them to advise of the reasons for absence and evidence relating to the absence may subsequently be requested. Parents/carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice or referred directly to the Magistrate's Court if they do not provide the evidence requested by the EWO.

The EWO for Merrydale Junior School is Dawn Chapman, she can be contacted on 0116 4545510 or at dawn.chapman@leicester.gov.uk.