



# Milford School

## Attendance Policy

**Approved by:** Headteacher Sara Cox                      Reviewed: Every 2 years  
Curriculum & Standards Committee

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### 1. Aims and expectations

The staff of Milford School are committed, in partnership with the parents, pupils, governors, the Local Education Authority, to building a school which serves the community commendably, and of which the community is proud.

The school staff, alongside the LEA, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

### Impact of Poor Attendance

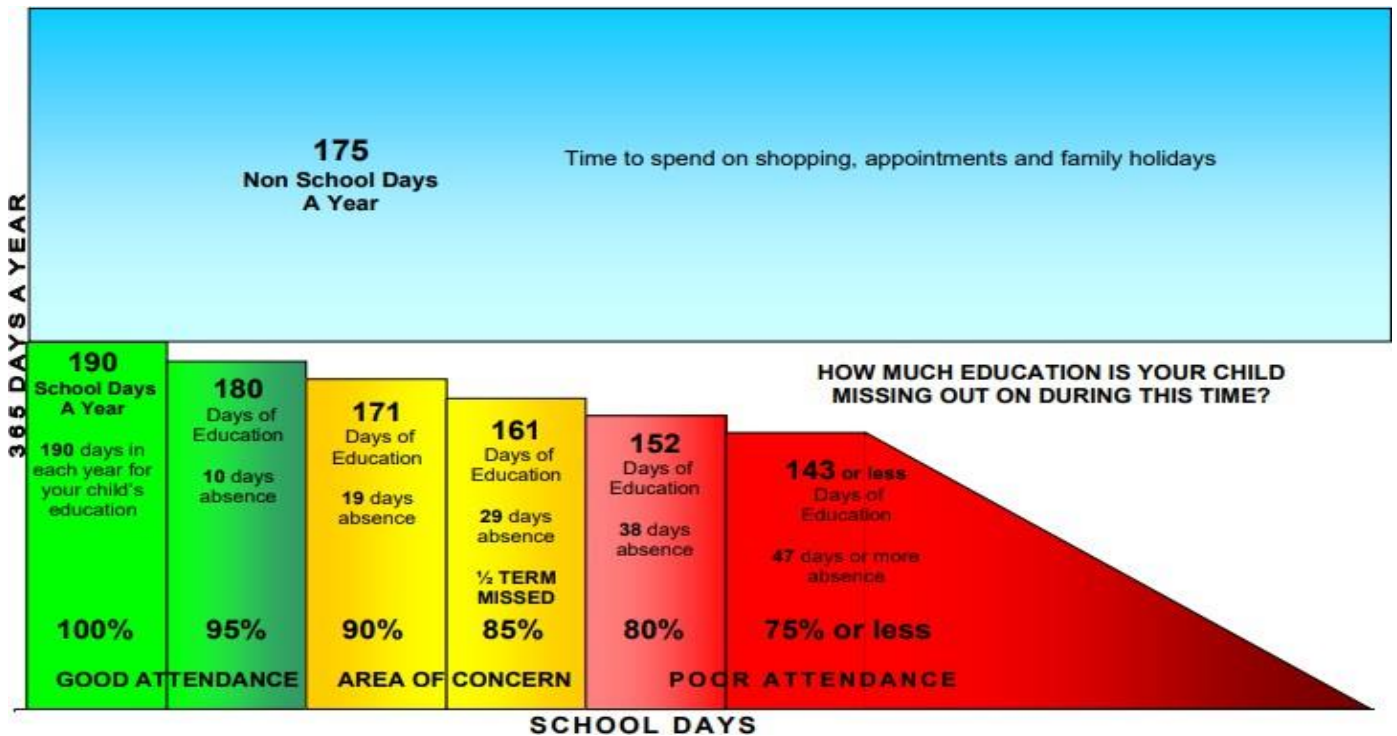
Each year there are only 190 statutory school days in school, 380 registration sessions.

This means there are 175 days (weekends and school holidays) for shopping, birthday treats, non-urgent medical and dental appointments, holidays etc.

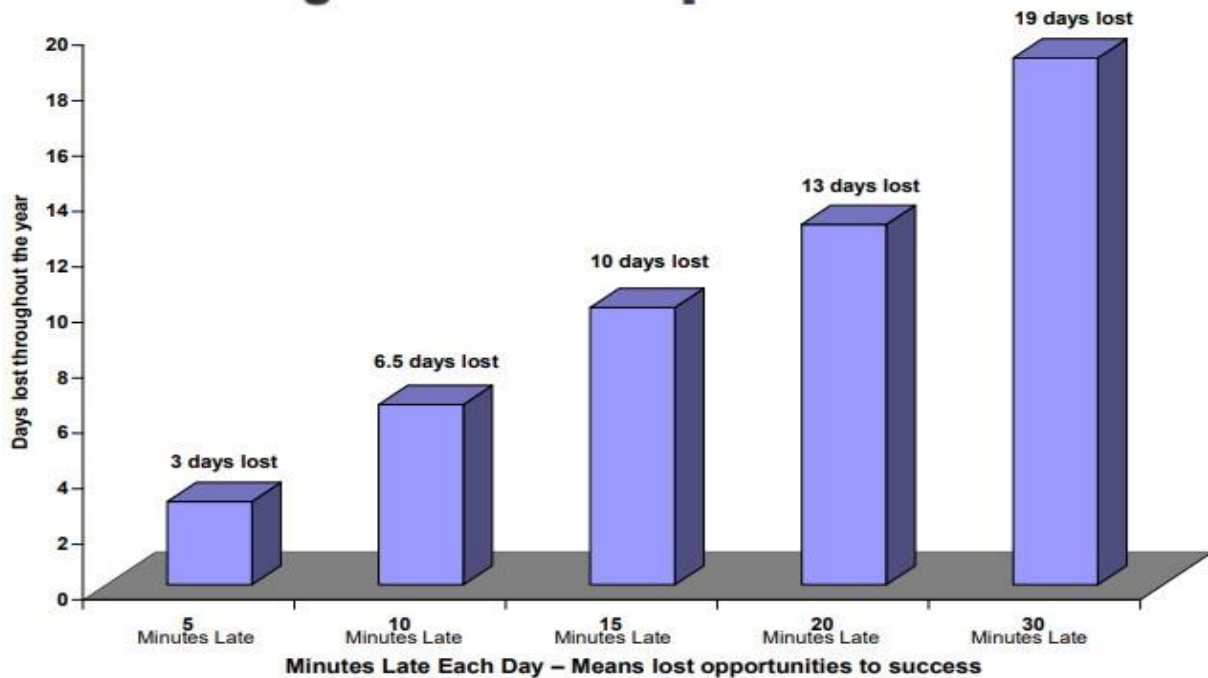
If a child misses 16 weeks of school in a year then they are out of school more than they are in school. If a child misses a day a week for their entire school life it is equivalent to missing 2 years of school.

| % Attendance | = % Absence | = Days missed | = approximate GCSE Grades Dropped | =Weeks missed | = Years missed (Over 5 years of education) |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--|
| 100          | 0           | 0             | 0                                 | 0             | 0  |
| 90           | 10          | 19            | 1                                 | 4             | 0.5  |
| 80           | 20          | 38            | 1 - 2                             | 8             | 1  |
| 70           | 30          | 57            | 2 - 3                             | 12            | 1.5  |
| 60           | 40          | 76            | 3 - 4                             | 15            | 2  |
| 50           | 50          | 95            | 4 - 5                             | 19            | 2.5  |
| 40           | 60          | 114           |                                   | 23            | 3  |
| 30           | 70          | 133           |                                   | 27            | 3.5  |
| 20           | 80          | 152           |                                   | 30            | 4  |
| 10           | 90          | 171           |                                   | 34            | 4.5  |

**Lates -** 5 minutes late is 3 days lost each year  
10 minutes late is 6.5 days lost each year  
15 minutes late is 10 days lost each year  
20 minutes late is 13 days lost each year  
30 minutes late is 19 days lost each year



## Being Late Adds Up



### We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day;
- discuss promptly with their class teacher or the head teacher any problems that deter them from attending school.

### We expect that all parents/carers will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child(ren) are unable to attend school;
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child(ren) away from school.
- If parents decide to send the child(ren) in their care to a different school, they **MUST** inform our school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:
  - the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
  - the address of the new school;

- the new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Inclusion Service.

**We expect that school staff will:**

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- monitor every pupil's attendance;
- contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- follow up all unexplained absences;
- encourage good attendance;
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children; provide a safe learning environment; provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns;
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LEA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Officer;
- meet, where possible, the requirements of the UN Convention - The Rights Of The Child, by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them.

## **2. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **3. School procedures**

#### **3.1 Attendance register**

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Not attending in circumstances relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

#### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 09:30 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents should email on [info@milford.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:info@milford.surrey.sch.uk) or call the school on 01483 422087 to leave a message on the answerphone or speak to the school office.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences, and an absence request form completed.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents should request a copy from the school office for any planned school absence. This will be either approved or not by the Head and a copy kept in your child's file.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:55 on each school day – or within their allocated time frame when staggered starts are in operation.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as arriving after registration has closed, using the appropriate code.

School registers are closed 30 minutes after the school start time (09:25am in normal school opening times) and pupils arriving after this time will be recorded 'as late after close of register' which counts as an unauthorised absence for that session.

### **3.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

When a pupil does not attend school, we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no email or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 10 am the school will endeavour to contact the parents and, or named contacts.
- If there is no response, the school conduct a home well-being visit to check on the child's welfare.

- The school will tell parents that if the absence persists that a referral will be made to the Inclusion Service.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Inclusion Service may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.
- All 'N' codes for unexplained absences must be followed up within five working days.

### 3.6 Reporting to parents

Yearly attendance marks will be part of your child's school report and school will report by monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Inclusion Service if the irregular attendance continues.

## 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. If parents wish to apply for leave of absence they must collect a form from the office or download a form from the website, complete it and return it to the headteacher. The headteacher will return the form with a decision within three days. Holidays are not considered to be an exceptional circumstance and will not be authorised. From September 2014 the school can adopt a fining system for unauthorised absences in line with the other schools in the area. If a pupil has accumulated a total of five days of unauthorised absence during the school year then a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued to the family.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision



## **4.2 Legal sanctions**

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the Fixed Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996, or withdraw the notice

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may consider:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent.

## **5. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Milford School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- by responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils;
- by weekly publishing and displaying attendance statistics;

## **6. Attendance monitoring**

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **Whole school to:**

- adopt the whole policy
- ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided
- initiate a scheme for contacting parents on the first day of absence
- consult and liaise closely with the Inclusion Service on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay
- to work in close collaboration with the Inclusion Service during their termly/half termly register analysis
- monitor and evaluate attendance with the school's Inclusion Officer

### **7.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **7.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.4 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- advising attendance and absence on a daily basis, and submitting this information to the school office.
- informing the headteacher of concerns;

- being alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to report these concerns as soon as possible to the headteacher.

### **7.5 Office staff**

Office staff are responsible for:

- completing registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily;
- following up any unexplained non-attendance within 5 working days;
- recording all reasons for absences in the register;
- taking calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system;
- monitoring attendance data at the school and individual pupil level;
- reporting concerns about attendance to the class/headteacher;
- working with the inclusion service to tackle persistent absence
- arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- advising the Head when a fixed-penalty notice could be issued

### **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

### **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code                      | Definition                    | Scenario  |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| /                         | Present (am)                  | Pupil is present at morning registration  |
| \                         | Present (pm)                  | Pupil is present at afternoon registration                                      |
| L                         | Late arrival                  | Pupil arrives late before register has closed                                   |
| <b>Authorised absence</b> |                               |   |
| B                         | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school   |
| D                         | Dual registered               | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered  |
| J                         | Interview                     | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment    |
| P                         | Sporting activity             | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V                         | Educational trip or visit     | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school     |
| W                         | Work experience               | Pupil is on a work experience placement   |
| C                         | Authorised leave of absence   | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances      |
| E                         | Excluded                      | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made              |
| H                         | Authorised holiday            | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances        |
| I                         | Illness                       | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness             |

|                             |   |   |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| <b>M</b>                    | Medical/dental appointment                        | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment   |
| <b>R</b>                    | Religious observance                              | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance   |
| <b>S</b>                    | Study leave                                       | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations  |
| <b>T</b>                    | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence                 | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school   |
| <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |   |   |
| <b>G</b>                    | Unauthorised holiday                              | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school   |
| <b>N</b>                    | Reason not provided                               | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges with 5 days, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| <b>O</b>                    | Unauthorised absence                              | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence   |
| <b>U</b>                    | Arrival after registration                        | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed   |
| <b>Other codes</b>          |   |   |
| <b>X</b>                    | Not required to be in school                      | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend  |
| <b>Y</b>                    | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody  |
| <b>Z</b>                    | Pupil not on admission register                   | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school   |
| <b>#</b>                    | Planned school closure                            | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day   |