



Moordown St. John's Church of England Primary School

Policy for Pupil Attendance

**“A Christian community where commitment to
educational excellence changes lives.”**

The Board of Directors of Moordown St. Johns CE Primary School, ratified this policy on 24th September 2026.

Review Date: September 2027

A copy of this policy in an alternative format, such as large print or different language, may be provided on request from the school office.

1. Purpose and principles

Regular attendance is essential for children's education, wellbeing, safety and sense of belonging. MSJ works with children and families to understand barriers, provide support early and secure the best possible attendance. We have high expectations for every pupil, while recognising that some children need reasonable adjustments or individual support to attend.

This policy explains what families can expect from the school, what the school expects from families, and how concerns will be addressed. It follows the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Working together to improve school attendance* and BCP Council's Attendance Graduated Response and Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

Our aims are to:

- promote the benefits of good attendance and punctuality;
- ensure every pupil can access the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- identify changes and patterns of absence early;
- listen to children and families and remove barriers through appropriate support;
- reduce persistent and severe absence; and
- keep accurate registers and meet our safeguarding and legal duties.

2. Key information for parents and carers

School day	Gates open at 8.20am. Pupils must be in class by 8.30am. The school day ends at 3.00pm.
Registers	Morning registration is at 8.30am and closes at 8.40am. Afternoon registration is at 1.00pm and closes at 1.10pm.
Reporting absence	Tell the school by 8.30am on the first day and on each further day of absence. Give the reason and expected return date.
How to contact us	Absence line: 01202 527683, option 1; text: 07860 030 292; or use the Arbor parent app or contact the school office.
Appointments	Arrange appointments outside school hours where possible. If this is not possible, tell the school in advance and minimise the time missed.
Term-time leave	Request permission in advance using the school form. Leave can only be authorised in the specific circumstances permitted by law; family holidays are very unlikely to qualify.
Help with attendance	Contact the class teacher, Mrs O'Gara or the school office promptly. Early conversations usually make problems easier to resolve.

In this policy, "parent" includes anyone with parental responsibility, and anyone who has day-to-day care of the child.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Parents and carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- ensure their child attends every day, on time and ready to learn;
- report absence by 8.30am, give a clear reason, keep the school updated daily and advise the expected return date;
- provide at least two current emergency contacts and promptly report any change;
- make appointments outside school hours where possible and provide appointment information when requested;
- request any term-time leave in advance and not make travel arrangements before a decision is received;
- work with the school and other services to address barriers, attend meetings and follow agreed attendance plans or contracts; and
- tell the school before moving or changing school, giving the new address and school details.

3.2 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend every day, arrive on time and speak to a trusted adult if anything is making attendance difficult.

3.3 Board of Directors

The Board of Directors sets high expectations, ensures the school complies with its statutory duties, makes appropriate resources and training available, monitors attendance and pupil groups, and holds the Headteacher to account. A named Director provides support and challenge for attendance.

3.4 Headteacher and senior attendance champion

The Headteacher, is accountable for implementing this policy, reporting to Directors, communicating expectations and authorising requests for leave. The Headteacher decides whether an absence is authorised and whether a case should be referred to BCP Council for a penalty notice or other legal intervention.

The senior attendance champions (Headteacher and Lead SENCO) lead attendance improvement. They oversee data and systems, coordinate early help and targeted support, work with children, families and professionals, agree reduced timetables, ensure that reintegration plans and reasonable adjustments are considered and report any child at risk of missing out on education. They can be contacted through the school office on 01202 527683.

3.5 Attendance officer, office staff and teachers

The Attendance Officer, Mrs Cheri Howard, monitors and analyses attendance, coordinates correspondence and reviews, and liaises with senior leaders and BCP services. Office staff record reported absence, complete first-day calling, maintain accurate registers and process leave requests. Class teachers take morning and afternoon registers promptly, notice changes or barriers, talk with families and pass concerns to the attendance team.

4. Attendance register and punctuality

The school keeps an electronic admission and attendance register. Morning and afternoon registers use the national codes required by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Each pupil is recorded as present, attending an approved place other than school, absent, or unable to attend because of an unavoidable cause. The school also records whether absence is authorised and the required details of off-site education or unavoidable causes.

Any amendment retains the original entry and records the amended entry, reason, date, and name and role of the person making it. Attendance register entries are retained for six years.

4.1 Late arrival

- Arrival after 8.30am but before 8.40am is recorded as late (code L).
- Arrival after 8.40am is recorded as unauthorised absence for that session (code U), unless another appropriate authorised code applies.
- The same approach applies to afternoon registration at 1.00pm and closure at 1.10pm.

Repeated lateness is followed up with parents. The school will seek to understand and resolve the cause, but persistent unauthorised lateness may contribute to the national penalty-notice threshold.

5. Absence and safeguarding

5.1 Unplanned absence and illness

Parents must report unplanned absence by 8.30am and on each subsequent day. Absence due to physical or mental illness will normally be authorised. For common childhood illnesses and diseases, the school will refer to NHS guidance such as [Is my child too ill for school?](#)

Where the school has a genuine concern about the reason or pattern of illness, it may ask for proportionate evidence such as an appointment message, prescription or information from a health professional. Medical evidence will not be requested routinely or unnecessarily. If the school intends to record an absence as unauthorised, it will tell the parent.

Families should speak to the school about ongoing physical or mental health needs. We will consider adjustments, an individual healthcare plan, support from health or local authority services, and a planned return.

Attendance expectations will not be reduced simply because a child has SEND or a medical condition, but support will be tailored to need and duties under the Equality Act 2010 will be met.

5.2 First-day response and unexplained absence

Unexplained absence is a safeguarding concern. If a pupil expected in school is absent without explanation, the school will:

1. contact the first parent or carer on the morning of absence and leave a message where possible;
2. try other emergency contacts if there is no response;
3. inform the Designated Safeguarding lead by 9.30am as a general target;
4. repeat contact on each day that absence remains unexplained
5. share information with the child's social worker or other relevant professional where appropriate;
6. make enquiries proportionate to risk, which may include contacting known family members, a home visit, seeking advice from children's services or requesting a police welfare check; and
7. establish the correct attendance code within five working days of the missed session.

Action may be taken sooner where the child is vulnerable or there is any reason to believe they may be at risk.

5.3 Children missing education and prolonged absence

The school will make reasonable enquiries with BCP Council to establish a child's whereabouts and will never remove a pupil from roll unless a statutory ground is met. In line with BCP's Children Missing Education policy, a CME referral will be made where a child fails to attend for 10 school days after an authorised absence, or is absent for 20 consecutive school days and the school has been unable to establish the reason or whereabouts after reasonable enquiries. Other safeguarding or CME referrals will be made earlier whenever risk requires this.

The school will notify the local authority about admissions and deletions outside standard transition points, pupils who fail to attend regularly, and pupils who are absent without authorisation for a continuous period of 10 school days. Where illness is expected to prevent

attendance for 15 school days, consecutively or cumulatively, the school will work with the local authority so that suitable education can be considered.

6. Planned absence and leave during term time

6.1 Medical and dental appointments

Appointments will be authorised where the school is notified in advance. Pupils should attend before or after the appointment whenever possible and be absent only for the time necessary.

6.2 Leave of absence

The Headteacher may grant leave only for circumstances allowed by the 2024 Regulations: a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad; an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution; study leave; a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable; or exceptional circumstances. The length of any authorised leave is also at the Headteacher's discretion.

Exceptional circumstances are rare, significant, unavoidable and normally short. Each request is considered individually, including its circumstances, timing, duration, the child's needs and relevant background. Evidence may be requested. Family holidays, lower prices, parental work commitments, birthdays and protest activity are not exceptional circumstances.

Parents must apply in writing as soon as the need is known and before making travel arrangements. Leave cannot usually be authorised retrospectively. If unauthorised leave reaches the national threshold, the school must consider referral to BCP Council for a penalty notice.

6.3 Other authorised absence

Other authorised reasons include illness; necessary medical or dental appointments; a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body; a mobile child travelling with a parent for occupational purposes where the legal conditions are met; and suspension or permanent exclusion where no alternative provision has yet been made.

Approved educational activities away from the school site—including an educational visit, approved sporting activity, dual registration or local-authority-arranged provision—are recorded using the relevant national code and are not absence from education.

7. Support and BCP graduated response

MSJ follows BCP Council's graduated response. Decisions are based on the child's pattern and circumstances, not on a percentage alone. Safeguarding action always takes priority.

Stage 1 Universal support	Clear expectations, accurate registers, first-day response, regular communication, inclusive practice and monitoring for every pupil.
Stage 2 Targeted early intervention	When a change, concerning pattern or poor attendance is identified, the school listens to the child and family, identifies barriers, agrees actions and reviews an attendance plan. Early Help or specialist services may be involved.
Stage 3 Targeted intensive support	For persistent or severe absence, increasing unauthorised absence, complex barriers or unsuccessful earlier support. The school and local authority may use an attendance contract, intensive multi-agency plan or other statutory support. Legal

intervention is considered when support is not appropriate, is not engaged with or has not worked.

7.1 Supporting individual needs

Support may include a trusted-adult check-in, adaptations to arrival or transitions, pastoral or SEND support, reasonable adjustments, an individual healthcare plan, help to access external services, an attendance plan, a phased reintegration or a short, time-limited part-time timetable.

Any part-time timetable will be exceptional, agreed with parents, regularly reviewed, have a clear plan to return to full-time education and be reported to BCP Council as required.

For pupils with an EHC plan, the school will work with the local authority where attendance is falling or barriers relate to the pupil's needs.

For pupils with severe absence, the school will work jointly with BCP and other services. The school will not use attendance rewards that disadvantage children whose absence relates to disability, ill health or other circumstances beyond their control.

7.2 Attendance plans, contracts and Education Supervision Orders

An attendance plan records the barriers, agreed support, responsibilities, review date and improvement sought.

Where voluntary support has not secured improvement, the school or local authority may formalise arrangements through an attendance contract.

If other approaches have not worked, BCP Council may consider an Education Supervision Order through the Family Court. These measures aim to secure support and regular attendance; they do not replace safeguarding action.

8. Legal intervention and penalty notices

BCP Council may use legal intervention under the Education Act 1996 where a parent fails to secure regular attendance. Options include a penalty notice, prosecution, an Education Supervision Order or a parenting order. The school considers each case individually, including support offered, engagement, SEND, health, equality duties and safeguarding circumstances.

8.1 National threshold

The national threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence—usually five school days—within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The sessions may be consecutive or non-consecutive, may be a combination of unauthorised codes (including unauthorised term-time leave and lateness after registration closes), and may span terms or school years. When the threshold is met, the school must consider whether a penalty notice or another course of action is appropriate.

8.2 Notice to Improve

Where support is appropriate but has not worked or has not been engaged with, a Notice to Improve will usually provide a final opportunity to improve before a penalty notice. In line with BCP's Code of Conduct, it normally lasts between three and six school weeks and states the attendance concern, support already offered, further support available, expected improvement and consequences. BCP's Fast Track to Attendance process may serve the equivalent function.

8.3 Penalty notices

- BCP Council, not the school, decides whether to issue a penalty notice. The school provides the referral and evidence.
- For a first penalty notice for a pupil, the fine is £80 per parent if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days.

- A second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within three years is £160, payable within 28 days.
- Only two penalty notices may be issued to the same parent for the same pupil within a rolling three-year period. If the threshold is met again, prosecution or another intervention will be considered.
- There is no statutory right of appeal. Non-payment may lead to prosecution for the original attendance offence.

For unauthorised term-time leave, support or a Notice to Improve may not be appropriate before referral. A separate penalty-notice arrangement applies if a parent allows a suspended or excluded pupil to be in a public place during the first five school days without reasonable justification.

9. Monitoring attendance and reporting to families

Attendance is monitored continually and reviewed formally at least half-termly. The school analyses whole-school, year-group, pupil-group and individual data; compares it with local and national information; looks for emerging patterns; and evaluates the effect of support. Directors receive regular reports and challenge leaders about impact and equality of access.

Persistent absence means missing 10% or more of possible sessions.

Severe absence means missing 50% or more.

These definitions include authorised and unauthorised absence. A child does not need to reach either threshold before the school offers help or acts on a concerning pattern.

Parents receive attendance information through reports and consultations and will be contacted when a pattern or level causes concern. Wherever possible, communication will explain the days and learning missed, listen to the family's circumstances and identify practical next steps rather than relying on percentages alone.

10. Legislation and related guidance

This policy reflects:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996;
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended;
- the Equality Act 2010;
- Department for Education statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education and school census guidance;
- BCP Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, Attendance Graduated Response and Children Missing Education policy.

It should be read alongside MSJ's safeguarding and child protection, SEND, supporting pupils with medical conditions, behaviour, admissions and children with health needs who cannot attend school policies.

11. Review and version history

The Board of Directors reviews this policy annually and earlier if legislation or statutory or local authority guidance changes.

Signed: A. Swain



Date: 24.09.26

Chair of Directors

August 2024	Full review to reflect Working together to improve school attendance, the 2024 Regulations, national penalty-notice framework and BCP guidance.
September 2025	Annual review and amendments to attendance correspondence.
September 2026	Policy rewritten and shortened for parents; aligned with the July 2026 'The Key' model policy, BCP graduated response, BCP Penalty Notice Code of Conduct and BCP CME policy; support and reintegration strengthened; CME thresholds updated; operational letter templates removed from the policy and retained separately.

Appendix 1 National attendance codes

The school uses the current national codes. This summary is for ease of reference; the statutory Regulations and current DfE guidance take precedence.

Present	/ morning; \ afternoon; L late before register closes
Approved place other than school	K local-authority provision; V educational visit; P approved sporting activity; W work experience; B other approved educational activity; D dual registration
Authorised leave	C1 regulated performance/employment abroad; M medical/dental appointment; J1 interview; S study leave; X non-compulsory school-age pupil not required to attend; C2 part-time timetable; C exceptional circumstances
Other authorised absence	T parent travelling for occupational purposes; R religious observance; I illness; E suspended or permanently excluded with no alternative provision
Unable to attend due to unavoidable cause	Q lack of access arrangements; Y 1 transport unavailable; Y 2 widespread travel disruption; Y3 part of premises closed; Y 4 whole site unexpectedly closed; Y5 criminal justice detention; Y6 public-health guidance or law; Y7 other unavoidable cause
Unauthorised absence	G holiday not granted; N reason not yet established; O absent in other or unknown circumstances; U arrived after registration closed
Administrative	Z prospective pupil not yet on admission register; # planned whole-school closure

LEAVE IN TERM TIME REQUEST FORM

Parents/carers must ask permission for their child to be absent during term time, and it is at the Headteacher's discretion to decide if the absence will be authorised. **The Headteacher may authorise absence for leave only in exceptional circumstances.** If leave is taken without permission, or no application is made, parent/carer(s) risk being issued with a Penalty Notice or being prosecuted on their return. Parent/carer(s) wishing to apply for their child to have leave from school should complete this form and return it to **Moordown St. John's Primary School** for consideration.

PARENT/CARER(S) SECTION (to be completed first)					
Child's name:					
Date of birth:		Year group:		Class group:	
Parent(s)/carer(s) name(s):					
Child's address: <i>Include parent's address if different from child:</i>					
Telephone number:			Email address:		
Reason for request: <i>Use an additional sheet if needed</i>					
Date of first day of absence:				Date of return to school:	
Parent/carer signature/s:					
SCHOOL SECTION (Please return a copy of this form to the parent/carer after consideration)					
Leave in term time request <i>(delete as appropriate):</i>	(i) approved days			(ii) not approved school days	
Reasons (optional):					
Should the request not be approved, but the leave still taken, the Headteacher will decide whether grounds are met to refer to BCP for prosecution. Further information can be found in the BCP Code of Conduct, available on the BCP website. A Penalty Notice could be issued in lieu of a prosecution by BCP Council on your return, incurring a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. If this is a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. Fines per parent are capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. If the Penalty Notice is not paid BCP Council will consider prosecution proceedings under s.444(1) or 444(1A) Education Act 1996. If convicted, sanctions can include a fine of up to £2,500 and a prison sentence of up to 3 months, and you will have a criminal record. Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued per parent, per child.					
Headteacher signature:				Date:	

Note: Leave is not authorised until signed confirmation has been received from the Headteacher