Moorfield Primary School

Attendance Policy

Draft for governing body approval on 10 November 2026

Policy detail	Arrangement
Scheduled approval date	10 November 2026
Effective date	To be confirmed on approval
Review	Annually from approval, or sooner if requirements change
Policy lead	Ian Bussey, Headteacher (School Attendance Champion)
Attendance governor	Oliver Stokes
Whole school attendance target	97%

This policy sets out how Moorfield Primary School promotes regular attendance, records attendance accurately, follows up absence and works with families to remove barriers. Governors are asked to consider and approve the policy. An approval note at the end identifies publication and governance actions.

1 Purpose and principles

We want every child to attend regularly, arrive on time and feel safe, welcome and ready to learn. Our whole-school attendance target is 97%. This is an improvement target, not an entitlement to take absence. Children should attend every session they are expected to attend unless there is a lawful reason for absence.

We work with children and parents to understand absence and agree appropriate support. Decisions draw on attendance patterns, safeguarding information, health and SEND needs, family circumstances and professional judgement. We act promptly when concerns arise and do not wait for an attendance percentage or a scheduled meeting before responding.

This policy applies to Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Legal enforcement for irregular attendance applies to children of compulsory school age. We record attendance for all registered pupils, using the appropriate codes and recognising the different arrangements available before compulsory school age. In this policy, parent includes a natural parent, a person with parental responsibility and a person who has care of the child.

2 Responsibilities and contacts

School leadership and governors

Ian Bussey is the Senior Attendance Champion. He leads attendance improvement, oversees decisions and support, ensures staff understand their responsibilities and works with the local authority. In his absence, attendance decisions, including leave decisions where delegated, are made by an assistant headteacher.

The governing body oversees the effectiveness of this policy, challenges attendance trends and ensures statutory responsibilities are met. Oliver Stokes is the governor with attendance oversight. The headteacher will provide attendance information to governors at least termly, including persistent and severe absence, patterns for relevant groups, the support provided and its impact.

Staff and local authority partners

Claire Guthrie is the day-to-day attendance contact. Office staff receive absence reports, check registers, make first-day telephone contact and maintain accurate records. Class teachers take registers promptly and accurately, welcome pupils and report attendance or punctuality concerns. Claire Hill, SENDCo, supports attendance where SEND or related barriers are involved. Staff share safeguarding concerns immediately with the designated safeguarding lead or deputy.

Daniel Santopietro is the school's Education Welfare Officer. The school reviews attendance with the EWO every three weeks. Work with the EWO includes monitoring, family meetings and home visits where appropriate. Telford & Wrekin Council's Attendance Support Team provides attendance advice and administers legal interventions under its local arrangements.

Contact	Details
School office	01952 386470
Absence reporting	claire.guthrie@taw.org.uk sue.hedges@taw.org.uk
Council attendance enquiries	attendancesupportteam@telford.gov.uk

Parents and pupils

Parents should ensure their child attends regularly and punctually, report absence by 9am, explain the reason and keep school informed. Parents should provide current contact details and, where reasonably possible, more than one emergency contact number, respond to enquiries and work with school on any barriers to attendance. Pupils are encouraged, in an age-appropriate way, to arrive on time and tell a trusted adult about anything making attendance difficult.

3 The school day and registration

Doors open at 8.45am. All pupils must be in class by 8.55am, when the gates close and morning registration begins. School finishes at 3.25pm for Reception, KS1 and KS2. Attendance is recorded electronically in Bromcom using the national attendance and absence codes.

Session	Registration	Register closes
Morning all pupils	8.55am	9.25am
Afternoon all pupils	1.15pm	1.45pm

Afternoon registration takes place at 1.15pm for all pupils. This is the common registration time across Reception, KS1 and KS2.

Registers remain open for 30 minutes. A pupil absent when registration begins who arrives before the register closes is recorded as late using code L. Arrival after closure is recorded using code U unless

another absence code more accurately applies, for example an authorised medical appointment. The 30-minute window is a recording rule, not an acceptable arrival window.

Children arriving after the gates close must report to the office with an accompanying adult so their arrival time and reason can be recorded. Repeated lateness is considered alongside the child's circumstances and may lead to discussion and support. Parents must arrange collection through the office when a child needs to leave during the day; children must not leave unaccompanied. Signing-in and signing-out records support safeguarding and emergency procedures.

4 Reporting and following up absence

How parents report absence

Parents should telephone 01952 386470 or email claire.guthrie@taw.org.uk or sue.hedges@taw.org.uk before 9am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day, unless a different contact arrangement has been agreed with school for an absence of known duration. Please give the child's name, class, reason for absence and expected return date, if known. If the reason or expected duration changes, parents should update school promptly.

Reporting an absence does not itself authorise it. The school determines the correct attendance code from the circumstances. Parents should contact the office as soon as possible if an emergency prevents notification by 9am.

Unexplained or unexpected absence

Office staff check absence reports against the register and telephone parents on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence. If contact is unsuccessful, they try other emergency contacts and any other appropriate known contacts. Unresolved absence is referred promptly to the headteacher or designated safeguarding lead or deputy, according to the individual risk.

School considers the child's vulnerability, known safeguarding information, attendance history and family circumstances when deciding next steps. These may include further contact, a home visit by appropriate staff or the EWO, contact with an allocated social worker, or a referral through local safeguarding procedures. Immediate danger is referred to the emergency services. Action is not delayed simply because a fixed number of days has not elapsed.

Contact is attempted on each day absence continues without explanation. Where a child is attending alternative provision or another agreed setting, school has arrangements for checking attendance and promptly following up unexpected absence there. School records contact attempts, explanations, decisions, referrals and actions.

Code N is used temporarily when the reason for absence has not yet been established. The correct code is entered as soon as the reason is known and no later than five school days after the session. If the reason cannot be established within that period, the record is amended to code O. This coding deadline does not delay first-day contact or safeguarding action.

5 Monitoring and support

Attendance and punctuality are checked daily. Weekly patterns and emerging concerns are considered by the attendance team, with a formal review involving the headteacher or delegated leader, the day-to-day attendance contact and the EWO every three weeks. Weekly analysis complements the three-weekly EWO review.

At each three-weekly review, particular consideration is given to pupils whose attendance is close to 90%, is deteriorating towards that level or indicates a risk of persistent absence, as well as pupils

already persistently or severely absent. Review is informed by all relevant information, including safeguarding concerns, reasons and patterns of absence, lateness, health and SEND needs, family circumstances, the child's views and previous support. No single percentage determines the school's response.

Persistent absence means missing 10% or more of possible sessions, equivalent to attendance of 90% or below. Severe absence means missing 50% or more of possible sessions. Both authorised and unauthorised absence count towards these measures. These definitions guide monitoring; they do not mean every child has the same needs or that sanctions follow automatically.

School identifies concerns early and speaks with the family to understand barriers. Depending on the circumstances, the response may include a telephone discussion, a personalised letter, a meeting, an agreed attendance support plan, EWO involvement or a referral for wider support. Actions, responsibilities and review dates are recorded, and the impact of support is reviewed. Urgent concerns are addressed between scheduled reviews.

Moorfield can provide a trusted adult on arrival and work with families and the SENDCo on suitable adjustments. Following longer absences, school identifies barriers and plans support for return, including appropriate reintegration arrangements and help to reconnect with learning. Where needs extend beyond school, we work with the EWO and relevant services to seek appropriate Early Help, health or other support. Pupils with a social worker, children in care and young carers receive coordinated support with relevant partners.

Moorfield Messages, our weekly newsletter, includes an update on whole-school attendance and reinforces the importance of regular attendance. We do not use attendance certificates. Communications are sensitive to children whose health or disability affects attendance, and individual family circumstances are kept confidential. Parents receive information about their own child's attendance and are contacted directly when concerns arise.

6 Illness health needs and SEND

Absence due to physical or mental illness is recorded as illness when that is the appropriate reason. In most cases a parent's explanation that a child is too ill to attend is accepted. We do not apply blanket requirements for medical evidence based on an attendance percentage or a set number of illness absences.

Where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the illness, or evidence would help us understand prolonged or recurring health needs and plan support, school discusses this with the family. Any request is proportionate and flexible about the evidence available; a new GP appointment or doctor's letter is not routinely required.

We work with parents, the pupil and relevant professionals to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and address barriers arising from SEND or health needs. Claire Hill supports this work. A diagnosis is not a prerequisite for listening to concerns or considering support. Attendance is recorded accurately and support is reviewed; absence is not automatically authorised or treated as misconduct solely because a child has SEND.

School makes the required sickness return to the local authority where there are reasonable grounds to believe a compulsory-school-age pupil will miss 15 school days consecutively or cumulatively in the school year due to illness. We work with the local authority on suitable education where health needs prevent attendance. Necessary referrals and support are not delayed until 15 days have passed.

Medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside school hours where possible. When this is not possible, parents should notify the office in advance where practicable, and the pupil should

attend for as much of the day as they can. School records the appropriate code for the session and the actual arrival or departure.

All compulsory-school-age pupils are entitled to full-time education. A temporary part-time timetable is used only in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests, with parental agreement, a documented support or reintegration plan, safeguarding arrangements, regular reviews and a proposed end date. It is not used to manage behaviour. The local authority is involved as appropriate, including discussion where a pupil has an EHCP, and sessions are recorded using the correct code. Remote education is a last resort within a return-to-school plan and does not count as attendance in the register.

7 Requests for leave during term time

Parents must apply to the headteacher using the school's existing leave-of-absence request form, available from the office. Requests should be submitted as soon as the need becomes known, with enough time for consideration wherever possible. We recognise that some circumstances arise at short notice. Parents should explain all circumstances they wish to be considered and should not book a holiday before permission is granted.

The headteacher, or an assistant headteacher acting under delegated authority in his absence, considers every request on its individual merits and determines the length of any leave granted. Exceptional-circumstances leave is granted only where the circumstances are exceptional. There is no blanket ban and no automatic entitlement arising from a particular event, a good attendance record or previous permission.

The Department for Education does not generally regard holidays or other leisure and recreation as exceptional circumstances. Requests for events such as a funeral are considered individually; the event does not automatically guarantee permission or a particular number of days. Other statutory categories of leave and absence, including religious observance, are considered under their own applicable rules and recorded with the correct national code.

All term-time leave decisions are confirmed in writing, whether or not school has also spoken to the parent by telephone. A decision may be handed to the parent, emailed to the registered email address or posted to the home address. It states the dates authorised or refused and, where relevant, the possible consequences of unauthorised absence.

Leave is not authorised retrospectively. Absence taken without a prior request, or after a request has been refused, is recorded as unauthorised where no other lawful reason or appropriate code applies. Absence beyond the authorised period is considered separately against the actual circumstances. Parents should contact school immediately if their child cannot return as planned.

8 Penalty notices and other legal intervention

We take a support-first approach where support is appropriate. If support has not worked or has not been engaged with, or support is inappropriate to the circumstances, such as an unauthorised term-time holiday, school considers referral to the local authority. Legal intervention is considered individually, taking account of the national framework, the local code of conduct and Equality Act duties.

In Telford & Wrekin, the Attendance Support Team has delegated responsibility for issuing school-absence penalty notices following referrals from schools. Moorfield refers cases; it does not issue penalty notices itself. The team also issues Notices to Improve under local arrangements.

The national threshold

A penalty notice must be considered when a pupil of compulsory school age has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A session is half a school day, so this is usually five days. Sessions need not be consecutive, may include a combination of unauthorised reasons and may fall across terms or school years. The relevant codes are G, N, O and U. Reaching the threshold requires consideration, not automatic issue.

The local authority retains discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met in an appropriate individual case. Examples include repeated holidays or other unauthorised absences deliberately kept below the threshold, or a four-day absence adjoining a bank holiday or staff training day. There is no guaranteed allowance of unauthorised absence below 10 sessions.

Amounts and repeat offences

Penalty notice history	Amount and consequence
First notice for the same parent and child	£160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days; otherwise £160 payable within 28 days.
Second notice within three years of the first	£160 payable within 28 days, with no early-payment reduction.
Third or subsequent qualifying offence within the rolling three-year period	No third penalty notice for the same parent and child. The local authority considers alternative action, which may include prosecution.

Penalty notices may be issued to each relevant parent for each child. The legal definition of parent includes natural parents, people with parental responsibility and people who have care of a child; responsibility is considered individually. Previous notices remain relevant when a child moves school or local authority area. Unpaid notices may lead to prosecution for the original attendance offence; the local authority must either prosecute or withdraw the notice as required by law.

Notices to Improve and further action

Where the threshold is met and support is appropriate but has not worked or has not been engaged with, a Notice to Improve will usually provide a final opportunity to engage with support and improve attendance. Under local arrangements the Attendance Support Team decides with school whether this is appropriate and issues the notice, normally with a review period of three to six weeks. Failure to improve can lead to further action before the review period ends where the notice provides for this.

A Notice to Improve is not used for an unauthorised term-time holiday where support is inappropriate. Information in the policy and on the website, or a warning when leave is refused, provides parents with notice of possible penalty action. Other interventions can include an attendance contract, an education supervision order or prosecution where appropriate; decisions rest with the relevant authorised body and follow the applicable legal requirements.

9 Records information sharing and safeguarding

School maintains accurate electronic admission and attendance registers in Bromcom. Amendments retain the original entry, the amended entry, the reason, the date and the identity of the person making the change. Register entries are preserved for six years from the date of entry, with appropriate electronic backups and access controls.

Attendance data is shared with the Department for Education and the local authority as required. School makes the required attendance returns about compulsory-school-age pupils who do not attend regularly or have 10 continuous school days of unauthorised absence, at the frequency agreed with the local authority and no less frequently than monthly. Sickness returns are made as described in section 6. Statutory information sharing and safeguarding action do not depend on parental consent where another lawful basis applies.

We share relevant information with other schools and agencies to coordinate support and safeguarding, in accordance with data protection law and the school's privacy notices. Attendance concerns may indicate a safeguarding issue, and staff follow the child protection policy alongside this policy. If a child's whereabouts are unknown or they may be missing education, school makes prompt enquiries and works with the local authority under local procedures. A pupil is removed from roll only when the legal grounds are satisfied and required enquiries and notifications have been completed.

10 Review and publication

The headteacher and governing body review this policy annually, or sooner if law, guidance or local arrangements change. Review considers attendance and punctuality trends, persistent and severe absence, relevant pupil groups, family feedback and the effectiveness of support and intervention. Staff receive appropriate training on registration, coding, absence follow-up and safeguarding responsibilities.

Following approval, school publishes the full policy on its website and explains the key arrangements to parents. The attendance webpage, leave request form, refusal letters and other communications will be checked for consistency with this policy and the council's September 2026 information. The council's updated leave-of-absence leaflet and penalty notice code of conduct should be available alongside the policy.

Approval note for governors

This note accompanies the draft for decision and should be removed from the published policy after the decisions below are recorded.

- Approve annual policy review and at least termly reporting to governors. These are proposed governance arrangements; the school has confirmed three-weekly EWO reviews.
- Note that weekly attendance pattern analysis complements the three-weekly EWO meeting, as expected by the statutory guidance. The policy does not introduce a 95% intervention trigger or an automatic sanctions ladder.
- Ensure all leave decisions are confirmed in writing, including where the initial response is by telephone. Update forms, correspondence and the website consistently.
- Record the governing body's decision on 10 November 2026 and complete the effective date and next annual review date. Confirm office contact details and named roles remain current before publication.

Sources and supporting documents

Statutory and local sources used for this draft are listed below. National and local requirements take precedence over comparator school wording.

Department for Education, Working together to improve school attendance, July 2026. In particular paragraphs 26 to 42, 43 to 70, the national framework for penalty notices and Chapter 8 on registration codes. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/208/contents

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, including the 2024 amendments. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2007/1867/contents

Education Act 1996, including sections 7, 19, 444 and 576; Equality Act 2010.

Telford & Wrekin Council, Information to add to schools Attendance Policy, School website and correspondence regarding leave in term time, September 2026. Supplied by the school.

Telford & Wrekin Council, Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, reviewed September 2026; and Leave of Absence Leaflet, September 2026 updated draft v7. Supplied by the school.

Moorfield Primary School, 2024 to 2025 prospectus attendance procedures, read alongside current procedures confirmed by the headteacher. https://moorfieldprimaryschool.co.uk/media/65589/school-prospectus-24-25.pdf

Read alongside the school's child protection and safeguarding, SEND, supporting children with medical conditions, equality, behaviour, complaints and data protection policies, and the current statutory guidance on children missing education and education for children with health needs.