

Malmesbury Primary School



Malmesbury

Primary & Nursery School

Attendance Policy

Prepared by	Stephen Donegan
Committee responsible	Full Governing Body
Status	Not statutory
Date ratified by Governors	09/2026
Date for review	09/2027
Signed (Chair of Governors)	
Signed (Headteacher)	

Malmesbury Primary School

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY 2025-2026

Malmesbury Primary School is committed to providing a high-quality education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, Malmesbury believes a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance, and the link this has to achievement and attainment.

Malmesbury Primary School promotes early intervention and prevention of poor attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills.

- [The Education Acts 1996 and 2002](#)
- [The Children Act 1989](#)
- [The Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)
- [The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Sentencing Act 2020](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#) [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)

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

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals. This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Attendance team – contactable on School@malmesbury.merton.sch.uk

Attendance lead – Head Teacher

Attendance Officer – Office administrator for attendance

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office twice daily.

School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate person in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.15am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. If school day appointments are unavoidable, please ensure where possible, children attend school before and after appointments .

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register 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

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

School Procedures

Absence

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as 'no reason given'.

On the first day of absence parents and carers are expected to inform the school (by telephone or email) at the start of the school day (**by 9:15am**) if a child is unable to attend. They should also give an indication of how long they are expected to be absent.

Failure to contact school will result in school staff phoning or sending a text message to find out the reason for absence.

The school is then able to mark the register appropriately as either an authorised or unauthorised absence. The decision to authorise or unauthorise absence rests with the school.

If no contact can be made with either parents or emergency contacts by the second day of absence, members of school staff will meet to consider making a home visit to investigate the absence.

If no contact can be made at the visit, school will then consider reporting the absence to the Educational Welfare Officer.

If a child is absent from school, he/she should not be on the school site during the day of the absence.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as far in advance as possible using a 'Leave of Absence' form (available from the school office).

The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- 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
- Other 'exceptional circumstances' where no alternative solutions are available.

On receipt of an application for leave on the appropriate form together with any supporting documentation, consideration will be given to the circumstance. Without the appropriate evidence, all leave of absence will be unauthorised. A copy of the form outlining the decision of the school (whether absence is authorised or unauthorised) will be sent within 7 days.

Any leave of absence that is not authorised is very likely to result in a fine being issued by the London Borough of Merton (see below).

Ten days' unauthorised absence and fifteen days attributed to illness

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing education (CME). The Education Welfare Officer will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents are asked to help us by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Twenty Days of Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 20 consecutive school days will be notified to the Local Authority as a child Missing in Education and by submitting a referral to the Education Welfare Officer. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

If a pupil moves too far from Malmesbury Primary School to attend the school/moves out of the area/abroad the parents must complete a school leavers form, available from the school office. This will provide us with the pupil's new home address, potentially their new school name and contact details and contact information for their parents/carers. If no/insufficient detail is provided to the school, the pupil will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing from Education and the Local Authority will need to make appropriate checks.

Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

The school attendance officer will work together with the local authority and other relevant professionals to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or cumulatively, will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes Public Exam provision and the education of siblings where the family have had to travel and stay away from the home for medical reasons. Please see Supporting Children with Medical Needs policy for further information.

Legal sanctions

- Parents will be notified in writing (in most circumstances) when their child's attendance drops below 95%, this will be followed up with a second written notification (in most cases) if attendance does not improve.
- Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence for illness related absences. Failure to produce medical evidence will result in absences being recorded as unauthorised.
- Failure to improve attendance may result in parents being asked to sign an **Attendance Contract** – a formal written document with the school, parents(s), pupil(s) and school's Education Welfare Officer – setting targets to address their child's poor attendance.
- If attendance drops and stays below 90%, or the above-mentioned targets are not met, the child will be referred to the school's EWO (Education Welfare Officer) and parents subject to a possible fine.
- Fines can be issued where there are 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10-week period: The first fine issued per parent, per child, will be £160. If this is paid within 21 days the fine is reduced to £80. After the 21 days if the full fine is not paid by day 28 the matter will usually result in prosecution under s4441 Education Act 1996.

A second fine issued per parent, per child, will be £160 with no part payment permitted. Failure to pay the fine will usually result in prosecution under s4441 Education Act 1996.

Any further offence will be addressed via prosecution under s4441 Education Act 1996.

- Parents can also be prosecuted under s4441A Education Act 1996
If prosecuted and convicted you could be fined up to £2500 and receive a criminal record.
- The payment must be made directly to the local authority.
- Fines can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue fine may consider:

- The 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 or withdraw the notice.

A Welcome Back

It is important that, where appropriate, on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include a discussion about the best way for the child to catch up on missed work where appropriate and be brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.45am. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late. If they arrive after 9.15am, without an acceptable reason they will be marked as having an absence (see below). Pupils who arrive late following an early morning appointment should bring evidence of this, e.g. an appointment card.

The afternoon registration will be at 1.05pm.

Nursery afternoon registration 12.30pm

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (8.45-9.15am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed (9.15am) will be marked as an **unauthorised absence**, using the appropriate code (U)

Promoting/improving attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. A half termly newsletter will inform parents of the importance of good attendance and about strategies being used in school to raise attendance.

Attendance Awards

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance.

- Weekly celebration assembly for children to celebrate class with the highest attendance

- Termly attendance certificate
- Termly attendance newsletter to share 100% attendance with parents
- Termly class rewards for classes with the most attendance stars
- Yearly prize for all children with 100% attendance

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. Progress towards these targets will be analysed regularly by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and strategies adopted in line with this policy will be implemented to achieve or exceed the target. It is the responsibility of the parents, staff and pupils at Malmesbury Primary School to ensure good attendance and achievement of targets.

Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Our school's target for 2026-2027: 96%

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels termly.

Register Security

In Autumn 2019 Malmesbury moved to a system of electronic registration so paper copies of registers are no longer stored in school.

Registers by law must be kept for at least 6 years.

Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes.

Alternatively, electronic back-ups can be made. These also need preserving for at least three years.

All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)

Suspension from school

With effect from the 1st September 2022, any pupil who has been suspended from school, and provision arranged, if the student does not attend the provision this shall be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in further action taken by the school, please see also the penalty notice section.

Part-time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. ([Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)).

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision.

There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence.

Review

This policy is due for review in September 2027

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendices

1 The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
- [b] To any special needs he may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

2. Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

3.

MALMESBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL
Leave of Absence Request Form
LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

Request for Leave of Absence for exceptional circumstances during Term Time

It is not advisable to take your child/ren on a leave of absence during term time as this causes disruption to their education. Schools must follow the law in this regard and may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances if certain criteria are fulfilled.

School Attendance (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2024

- **Leave of Absence in exceptional circumstances is authorised at the discretion of the Head teacher.** (This is **not an automatic right** of parents/guardians)
- You should not normally take your child(ren) on a leave of absence during the school term.
- **Please do not book your leave of absence until authority is given.**
- Each request for leave of absence will be considered individually, taking into account the circumstances of the request and any supporting evidence provided.
- If the absence is approved by the Head Teacher you will be advised as to how many days the Head teacher has approved for your child's absence.
- If the school does not agree the absence and you take the leave without permission or your child is absent for more than the agreed number of days the absence will be unauthorised.
- Leave of absence taken without the authorisation of the school may lead to your child(ren) being referred to the Education Welfare Service and the possibility of statutory action and a fine/prosecution

In order for your application for absence to be considered, please complete below:

Name(s) of Child(ren).....

Form/Year-----

Home address:

.....
.....

Dates of absence: From..... To:.....

Reason for request **(additional evidence may be required)**/Who is travelling?

.....
.....

Signed: Parent/Guardian

Email address:..... Mobile phone number:.....

Date form submitted:.....

The above request for leave of absence in term time for
has/has not been authorised. If authorised, your child/ren should return to school
on:.....

Signed..... Headteacher/Principal.....

School Data Checklist:

For School Office Use Only

<u>Pupil's name</u>	
Previous leave of absence requested/taken (last 2 years)	
Nature of exceptional circumstances and evidence provided	
No of days granted (if any)	