

Mersey Park Primary School



Annex to the Attendance Policy to Support Full Opening

September 2020

Introduction

From September 2020 school will work with families and the local authority to secure regular school attendance for all pupils. Over the last few months some school cultures, norms and routines have been disrupted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and some pupils may have been exposed to a range of adverse experiences. School will need to make changes to reset attendance expectations and consider additional support to successfully reintegrate pupils back.

1. **PLAN: to ensure school has a clear, consistent and robust attendance policy and practice in place**

- Attendance will be mandatory from the start of the new school year, except where statutory exemptions apply.
- It will be made clear to parents/carers when pupils should not attend due to public health or clinical advice (see guidance on the school's website) and there will be a process in place for keeping absence for these reasons under review, for example when a self-isolation period should come to an end.
- Ensure these pupils and those who are continuing to shield, have access to remote education and that engagement is monitored.
- Take the register as usual and use attendance codes consistently.
- Registration periods will be extended to accommodate staggered start times, with registers now closing at 10.00am.
- Resume the expectation that parents will let the school know if a child is unable to attend and the reason.
- Contact the pupil's parent or carer on the first day of absence where this does not happen. We will be clear with parents/carers that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies.
- School will monitor closely, more prevalent causes of absence (for example, anxiety) due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, balancing reward, support for pupils and families and sanctions appropriately.

2. **COMMUNICATE: set high expectations for attendance and actively communicate this to parents and pupils**

- All staff and governors understand the importance of good attendance and have a good understanding of the school's policies.
- The annex to the attendance policy will be shared with all staff, pupils, parents/carers and governors to ensure that expectations are clearly understood.
- Attendance expectations will be shared in induction sessions with pupils and parents/carers, through newsletters and on the school's website.
- Visual reminders will be available around the school through displays and messages on the Anomaly Boards.
- School will continue to build on its strong relationships with parents/carers and will keep an open dialogue with those who need further information or reassurance on the importance

and/or safety of their children returning to school. All parents/carers who raised concerns in the school survey in June 2020 have received a phone call from C Hardy, Home/School Liaison Officer.

3. BE CONSISTENT: ensure expectations are enforced consistently

- School will continue to maintain a culture where excellent attendance is valued and expected by everyone in the school community. Regular feedback will be provided to staff, pupils and families on how well they are executing new procedures.

4. SUPPORT: identify pupils who are at risk of disengagement and provide specific support

- School is aware that many pupils are likely to need some social and emotional support on their return to school, and have made planned changes to the curriculum and timetable to allow for this to take place.
- Some pupils will be provided with extra support, such as those who have previously had poor attendance or fixed term exclusions as well as those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or who have not engaged with school during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.
- All pupils returning to school, were offered an induction morning with their new teacher and in their new classroom in the summer term, to set expectations and allay any concerns.
- Where pupils are new to the school, induction meetings were offered for the pupils and families in the summer term, to set expectations, understand concerns and build confidence.
- Staff have been offered additional training to spot signs of distress and poor mental health.
- Staff are able to identify where changes in behaviour (for example being fearful or withdrawn, aggressive or oppositional, or excessively clingy) may be an indication of an underlying issue.
- Where further support is needed, staff should consider what additional support or reasonable adjustments are needed and put a plan in place to deliver it, with regular points to review.
- Where children have special educational needs and disabilities, school has taken advice from local services (such as health and the local authority) to ensure the services and support are in place that will ensure a smooth return for pupils.
- For children who have a social worker or who are otherwise vulnerable, school has worked with families, pupils, social workers and other relevant services to ensure the right services and support are in place. School will inform social workers if the child does not attend in the new school year.

5. MONITOR AND IMPROVE: track attendance data to intervene early and review policies and processes regularly

- School will continue to regularly review attendance data and compare it with neighbouring schools and local and national averages where possible. This will inform decisions on where to focus efforts to intervene early and prevent patterns of poor attendance and behaviour becoming habitual and entrenched.
- School will invite feedback from staff and pupils regularly and discuss how new habits and routines are working, in order to provide useful data to support high-quality strategic decisions, inform practice and provide a regular commentary to all stakeholders on new expectations.
- School will regularly adjust provision in what is likely to be a changing context.