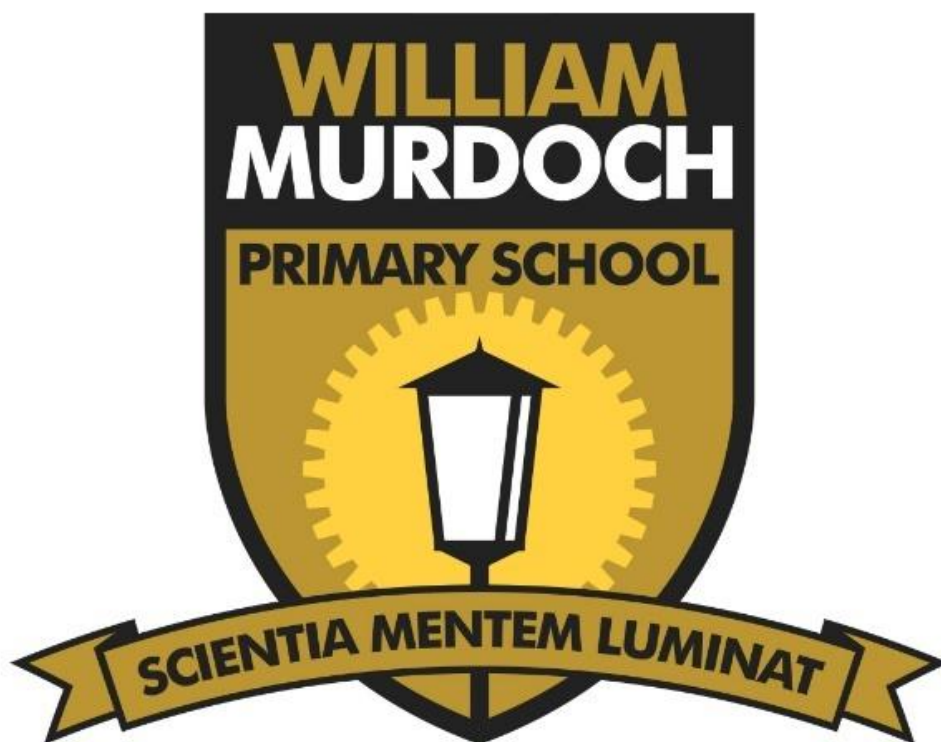


William Murdoch Primary School

Attendance Policy



Approved by:	Curriculum & Standards Committee	Date: 7 May 2025
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1. Rationale

William Murdoch Primary School aim to maximise the attendance percentages to ensure that all children get the greatest benefit from their education in school. It is important that children have good attendance and arrive punctually. As learners grow and prepare for their next states of education they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important qualities that are valued by others and the wider community beyond education.

Good attendance during the full school term is extremely important but there are a few months which are especially important and will diversely affect a child's education if they are not in school. These include, but are not limited to: September to facilitate transition, March and April because children are preparing for assessments and May for statutory end of Key Stage assessments.

It is important to remember that a letter or telephone call from a parent/carer does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised.

Improving attendance and punctuality is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – school staff, parents/carers and pupils.

2. Expectations

We use the following percentages to classify our attendance:

97% +	Outstanding
95% - 96%	Good
90% - 94%	Poor
Below 90%	Unsatisfactory – Officially ‘persistently absent’.

Expectations are communicated with parents at the beginning of every academic year and on a termly basis via newsletters. The table below is always included in the information shared.

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks' absent	Which means these many lessons are missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

3. Safeguarding

In communicating with parents, the link between attendance and pupils' attainment and wider wellbeing is clarified.

Poor attendance can be an indicator of a safeguarding concern. When there are safeguarding concerns, the school will intensify support through statutory children's social care, following the safeguarding procedures detailed in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

4. Authorised Absence

Authorised absence means that one of the following circumstances applies:

- Illness (not medical or dental appointment) – only when the school has a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness should medical evidence be requested to support the absence (see medical absence letter to be sent to parents on the instruction of the Headteacher).
- Medical or dental appointment. Absence should be agreed with the school in advance when it is not possible for the pupil to attend appointments out of school hours.
- Religious observance. (Only on dates set by a religious body).
- Fixed-term exclusion.
- Temporary part-time timetable to meet the individual special needs of a pupil (for a limited period).
- Leave of absence granted by the school in exceptional circumstances.
- Attending an approved education activity, attending another school or taking part in off-site activities such as educational visits and sporting events.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (school closed unavoidably; transport provided by the Local Authority is not available; local or national emergency resulting in widespread travel disruption).

5. Leave Of Absence

Department for Education (DfE) and Birmingham City Council guidelines state that Headteachers may no longer authorise a leave of absence except when the leave has been requested in advance and circumstances are exceptional, for example:

- Death of a parent/carer or sibling of a pupil.
- Life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil.
- Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required).
- Leave for armed forces personnel who are prevented by operational duties to take their leave at any other time).
- Leave of absence already granted by a previous school (within the last 6 months and supported by documentation from the previous school).

If unauthorised leave is taken, a penalty notice may be issued, legal action may be taken or a pupil may lose their place at their current school. The penalty notice will be for a minimum amount of £80 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. If a fine is not paid, a court attendance may be required and a fine of up to £1000 per child issued. This could result in a criminal record, Unauthorised leave in excess of 20 school days consecutively may result in a child being removed from the school register.

6. School Procedures

Promoting Punctuality

We are aware that persistent lateness can have a cumulative effect and deny full access to the National Curriculum. Pupils will be marked late if they arrive after registration, which is 8.50am. If pupils arrive after 9.20am, they will be assigned the U code, which means the session is classed as unauthorised absence.

We discourage lateness by:

- Providing a breakfast club facility on site.
- Monitoring pupil's punctuality via the school's Inventory Signing In system.

First Day of Absence

- Parents are asked to contact the school as soon as possible on each day of absence. The absence is then recorded on Arbor.
- If the school is not contacted by 9.30am, parents will be contacted by telephone in the first instance to alert them that their child is not in school and that they should contact the office to confirm absence and provide a reason for their child not being in school.
- If no contact is made, then the school will keep trying throughout the day. Other emergency contacts will be called as well to ascertain the whereabouts of the pupil. In the case of a child in care (Child in Care (CIC)/Looked After Child (LAC)), the child's social worker will be informed of any unexplained absence on the first day.
- The school office will produce a daily print out of pupils who do not attend, where no reason is provided.
- If the child does not attend school the following day and no contact is made, this is then recorded on Arbor and the Pastoral Manager is informed.

- If by day 2, a child has not attended school and no contact is made, then the Child Missing in Education (CME) Policy is followed with subsequent home visits as part of safeguarding procedures.
- If by day 3, parents have left messages giving a reason for absence but no verbal contact has been made, the school office will call to speak to parents in person.

7. Strategies For Tackling Persistent Absence And Emerging Concerns

- The Pastoral Manager tracks attendance weekly and highlights any concerns to the Deputy Headteacher.
- Patterns of absence and lateness are monitored and analysed by the Deputy Headteacher, with the support of the Pastoral Manager and the Senior Office Manager.
- Particular groups of pupils whose attendance is deemed poor or unsatisfactory are targeted. The Headteacher works with other schools in the local area to share effective practice when there are common barriers to attendance.
- The school follows Birmingham Local Authority's 'Support First' guidance when addressing instances of poor attendance. Stage one of 'Support First' is followed. A Headteacher's Concern letter is sent to parents informing them that their child's attendance is a concern. Once the letter has been sent, this is then tracked. If the attendance is still a concern then a phone call is made to parents inviting them to an informal attendance meeting in the first instance. If school is unable to contact parents then a letter is sent to them informing them of the attendance meeting. Early Help is offered in the first instance (with the Pastoral Manager and/or the Deputy Headteacher, acting as Lead Practitioner and making referrals to outside agencies where appropriate). Parents are invited to an informal meeting to discuss any issues and Early Help and support is available if needed.
- The Pastoral Manager liaises with other schools attended by any siblings to support the Early Help process.
- In the case of pupils with an Early Help Care Plan (EHCP), the SENDCo liaises with all appropriate agencies to put in place additional support and adjustments to ensure the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- If attendance has still not improved and Early Help has been refused then Step Two of 'Support First, FAM (Formal Attendance Meeting) is followed. Parents are invited to a FAM meeting and a contract is signed by both parents agreeing to the terms with the Pastoral Manager/Deputy Headteacher, where the potential for legal intervention is made clear.
- Once the meeting has taken place and parents have been informed that there should be no absences or lates and these will be unauthorised then the attendance is tracked for 10 weeks from the date of the FAM meeting.
- If attendance still does not improve, the Headteacher will work with Birmingham Local Authority on legal intervention.

8. Attendance Is Everyone's Responsibility

Parents will:

- Notify the school by phone/email by **9.30am** on the first day of absence, giving the reason for absence and the likely date of return to school.
- Ensure their children arrive at school in time for the morning register at **8.50am** every day.
- Plan holidays and family visits during the school holidays.

- Plan routine dental check-ups and visits to the optician during the school holidays.
- Inform the school of any medical, optician or dental appointments in advance if they are to take place in term time.
- Apply for leave of absence during term-time at least 2 weeks prior to the start date and **BEFORE** making any travel arrangements.
- Avoid requesting any leave of absence during periods where there are National Curriculum Assessments (beginning of April to the end of June).
- Liaise with the Pastoral Manager, Headteacher and other agencies where necessary to improve their child's attendance when they are at risk of persistent absence.

The Governing Body will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance, promote it across the school's ethos and policies and, in consultations with senior leaders, set attendance targets that demonstrate high expectations.
- Ensure school leaders fulfill expectations and statutory duties.
- Review attendance data and progress towards attendance targets termly. Discuss and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupil or cohorts/groups who need it most.
- Ensure the link governor for safeguarding focuses on attendance.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

The Headteacher will:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy (reviewed annually), which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Monitor the attendance and punctuality of cohorts, groups and individuals to identify immediate support needed and look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and work with staff to develop strategies to address them.
- Ensure the termly census data is completed accurately and shared with Birmingham Local Authority by the deadlines set.
- Ensure the school follows Birmingham Local Authority's Support First Attendance Procedures.
- Respond to leave of absence requests in a timely manner, following the DfE and Birmingham Local Authority guidance.
- In consultation with Governors, set annual targets for attendance that demonstrate high expectations.
- Inform Governors of attendance data regularly during full governing body meetings and relevant committee meetings.

The Deputy Headteacher will:

- Support the Pastoral Manager to take appropriate identified actions.

The Pastoral Manager will:

- Provide the Headteacher with a weekly report showing pupils whose attendance is 92% or below, to include notes.
- Provide the Headteacher with a weekly report showing pupils who have 5 or more session of unauthorised absence.

- Provide the Headteacher with a weekly report showing the percentage of L and U marks for each class.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and punctuality, and work with families to remove them.
- Following communication from the school office, conduct a home visit (adhering to the school's Home Visits Policy) on the second day of an unexplained absence and report to the Headteacher.
- Consult with parents of pupils with 5 sessions of unauthorized absences or those at risk of persistent absence to understand barriers to attendance and agree actions and clear success measures, liaising with outside agencies to support the Early Help process where necessary.
- Following consultations, upload record of actions and success measures on Arbor.
- Conduct school attendance review meeting (SARM) if attendance has not improved following the Early Help process. Upload the completed SARM record sheet on Arbor.

Class Teachers will:

- Accurately complete attendance registers on time at the start of each morning and afternoon session, using Arbor.
- If children are picked up late, **3.25pm** for Reception and Years 1, 3 and 5 (end of school day being 3.20pm), and **3.30pm** for Years 2, 4 and 6 (end of school day being 3.25pm), they should be taken to the Main Office. When collected, the parent/carer **MUST** sign their child/ren out using the Inventory system.
- Report any concerns or patterns relating to attendance or punctuality to the Deputy Headteacher and the Pastoral Manager.
- Inform parents of their child's attendance percentages at parents' evenings.

The School Office will:

- Accurately complete admissions and attendance registers.
- Ensure Arbor has the correct information for each pupil, including contact details for two different adults.
- Support the Headteacher to communicate attendance expectations to parents and carers.
- Support the headteacher to process applications for leave of absence.
- Complete the school census termly.
- Follow the first day of absence procedures.
- In the case of a child in CIC/LAC, inform the Deputy Headteacher. The Deputy Headteacher will then inform the child's social worker if there are any unexplained absences from school on the first day of absence. The social worker should also be informed if their name is to be deleted from the school register.
- Liaise with the Local Authority in the case of a child missing in education.
- Provide class teachers with attendance percentages the day before the autumn and spring parents' evenings and the day before the end of year reports are due to go out to parents.

Birmingham Local Authority will:

- Rigorously track local attendance data.
- Have a School Attendance Support Team to provide core functions to all schools free of charge.
- Bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools within Birmingham.

9. Legislation And Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [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.

10. Links With Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Child Missing From Education Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- Admissions

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Present
\	Present (pm)	Present
L	Late arrival	Present
B	Off-site educational activity	Approved educational activity
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
K	LA arranged provision at a place other the school	Approved educational activity
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	Absent with leave (not covered aby another appropriate code/description	Authorised absence
C1	Absent due to participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
C2	Part-time timetable	Authorised absence
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J1	Interview	Authorised absence
M	Medical/dental appointment	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller Absence	Authorised absence

Code	Definition	Scenario
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
D	Dual registered (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
Q	Lack of transport or boarding access arrangements arranged by LA	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y1	Transport normally provided by LA or school not available	Not counted in possible attendances
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel due to local, national or international emergency	Not counted in possible attendances
Y3	School partially closed	Not counted in possible attendances
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Not counted in possible attendances
Y5	Pupil in criminal justice detention	Not counted in possible attendances
Y6	Travel or attendance contrary to public health guidance or law on transmission of disease	Not counted in possible attendances
Y7	Unable to attend due to unavoidable cause	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil no yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils (planned closure)	Not counted in possible attendances

KEY

Present
Approved Education Activity (Present)
Unauthorised
No counted in possible attendances

Appendix 2: Pupil Attendance Review – Action Plan

WILLIAM MURDOCH PRIMARY SCHOOL



PUPIL ATTENDANCE REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

Pupil Name:		Year:		Date:	
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Key Issues	Action	Who	When	Status

Success Measures:

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