

##  **Two Moors Primary School Attendance Policy 2022**

At Two Moors Primary School, we continue to promote a joint approach in improving attendance and punctuality throughout the Tiverton Co-operative Learning area and, thereby, enable all pupils to realise their full potential.

**Why does good attendance and punctuality matter?**

A good education can be the cornerstone for future life opportunities. Missing school can leave gaps in knowledge and understanding and also place children at a disadvantage in both their educational development and potentially in their eventual GCSE success.

Beyond qualifications, going to school every day is crucial for a number of reasons:

* It’s the best place for pupils to learn
* It’s good preparation for future college or work. Colleges and employers expect a history of good attendance
* Parents will know where their children are and that they are safe
* It’s the law

**The law and school attendance**

The 1996 Education Act (s7) places a legal responsibility upon parents/carers to ensure that their child fully attends the school at which they are registered. This means that a child must attend school every day and on time (unless their parents/carers can prove that the absence was with the authorisation of the school or that it was unavoidable).

If a child has unauthorised absences, then the school can make a request to the Local Education Authority (through the Education Welfare Service) to instigate **Parental Responsibility Measures**. This could mean receiving any of the following:

* A Penalty Notice. Should a Penalty Notice be issued, one notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child involved. Currently, each Penalty Notice is for £60 if paid within the first 21 days, this increases to £120 if paid between the 22nd and 28th day. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days, then a Magistrates Summons will be issued. Also, if a Penalty Notice has already been issued within the previous 2 years, then the Local Authority will proceed straight to Magistrates Summons.
* A Magistrates Summons that could lead to a criminal record, a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment for up to 3 months.
* Education Supervision Order (ESO). The Children Act 1989 allows the Local Education Authority to apply to the Family Proceedings Court for an ESO for any child of compulsory school age, whom it is felt, is not being properly educated. The intention behind the ESO is to support parents in fulfilling their legal responsibilities. The ESO is only suitable where the child and the parents/carers are willing to co-operate with the process. If the application for an order is successful the ESO will last for one year, but may be extended for up to 3 years. A Supervising Officer will be appointed by the Court. The role of the Supervisor is to work with the child and family to ensure that an appropriate education is received.

**The law and requests for term-time absences**

As of September 2013, an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 came into force and greater clarity was introduced to the issue of schools authorising absence requests. These changes reinforced the Government’s view that every minute of every school day is vital and that pupils should only be granted authorised absences by the school in ‘exceptional circumstances’

A family holiday is not considered by the Government to be an ‘exceptional circumstance’ and therefore may not be authorised by the school.

If parents/carers would like to request ‘leave’ to be considered for authorisation due to exceptional circumstances, they must complete and complete an Absence Request Form (the S2 form) to the school.

If parents/carers choose to take a child out of school without the authorisation of the school, then Parental Responsibility Measures could be instigated.

**When are absences unauthorised?**

Two Moors Primary School is required to notify the Local Education Authority if a student has unauthorised absences.

If the Local Education Authority believes the absences to be avoidable then it can initiate Parental Responsibility against the child’s parents/carers.

Unauthorised absences can be acquired when:

* Leave has been requested, but the circumstances are such that the school is unable to authorise the leave (and the leave is still taken anyway).
* Leave is not requested and/or the school has grounds to believe that the child has been taken out of school for an avoidable reason (example – a family holiday, buying uniform, looking after a sibling).
* Sometimes, there have been occasions when schools have been notified that the pupil is sick, but the school discovers or reasonably believes that the reason given for the absence is not genuine.
* A child continually arrives late after the registration period has closed.
* The Head Teacher has the authority to unauthorise any absence that they feel is avoidable.

**Guidelines**

### Absence can only be authorised by the school for:

1. sickness or other unavoidable cause (solely affecting that child)
2. days set aside for family religious observance
3. where LA school transport has not been provided to a child that is entitled to it
4. other reasons, approved by the school.

### For all absences, there should normally be formal notification from parents /carers. Only the Headteacher (or delegated members of staff) can authorise any absence and may refuse to do so, unless it is felt that the absence is justified by one of the reasons stated above.

### There is no automatic entitlement for absence for holidays during term time (Amendment to the Education [Pupil Registration] [England] Regulation 2006), except for families serving in the Armed Forces.

### In cases of unauthorised term time holidays, the Headteacher should follow the Devon County Council protocol and apply directly to the Education Welfare Service to generate a Penalty Notice warning letter (without, necessarily, contacting the school’s EWO). This should be done by completing Penalty Notice Certificate of Absence Form and returning it to:

Legal Proceedings Officer, Devon County Council, Room L60, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4QD. **educate.schoolabsencepenaltynotices-mailbox@devon.gov.uk**

### The school will liaise closely with parents /carers advising them as early as possible if there are cases of suspected unauthorised absence, persistent lateness, or their child’s attendance falls below 95%

### Late arrival should be actively discouraged. Separate registration codes are required for lateness prior to close of registration and afterwards. It has been agreed that registers should remain “open” for the first 30 minutes of the morning and afternoon registration period. In circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, the school may keep the register open for a longer period. Late arrival during these periods will be coded as an ‘Authorised Late’ (‘L’).

### Late arrival after the register is closed is an ‘Unauthorised Absence’ (coded ‘U’) which could provide grounds for prosecution. Where a pupil arrives after close of registration with a legitimate reason, the absence should be authorised using the appropriate code (for example due to an appointment with a doctor).

### Parents / carers have a responsibility to inform school of late arrival or other absence before 9.30 am on the day; or, for absences of longer than one day, before 9.30 am on the first day.

### Where no satisfactory explanation for absences is received, parents /carers will be contacted by the school.

### The Education Welfare Officer will be notified in the following circumstances:

* unauthorised absence by a student of more than 10 half-day sessions (in aggregate) in any one term
* attendance of less than 90% by any pupil
* where action taken at school level has failed to improve attendance/punctuality for a particular pupil

### When a pupil’s attendance falls below 90% and they also have 10 or more unauthorised absences, unless there are extenuating circumstances, they should be considered for Parental Responsibility Measures.

### Parents /carers are to inform the school, in writing, if a child is to be removed from a roll. Details of the new school should be provided, if applicable. (Where the ‘new’ school is known, as a safeguard, the ‘old’ school should make contact with the receiving school to alert them to the move).

### If a child leaves a school to be home educated, then an Elective Home Education Safeguarding Pupil Form must be completed and returned to:

### electivehomeeducation@devon.gov.uk

### When a pupil moves from school and no notification has been received from another school, the ‘old’ school should complete a ‘Children Missing from Education’ form CME 1 and return it to:

### ONE Data Team, SCOMIS, Great Moor House, Bittern Road, Exeter EX2 7NL or if you can use Egress Switch Secure mailing to send to onesystemcme@devon.gov.uk

### The school will adopt a multi-agency approach in supporting children and their families to improve their attendance.

### For Health and Safety reasons, schools need to be aware of where pupils are, particularly those leaving or arriving on the premises during a session. An appropriate recording system should be instigated.

### Parents’ meetings, and other occasions can be used to stress to all parents the importance and benefits of regular attendance and punctuality. Advantage should also be made of regular school to home newsletters etc.

**Policy Review**

Agreed on 27th September 2022

Next review September 2023