MARNER
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance and Lateness Policy

Policy Owner	Carol Doherty (AH)
Approval Body	Governing Body
Approval Date	October 2026
Review Date	September 2027

Statement of Intent

Marner Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Marner Primary School.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- *Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence*
- *Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled*
- *Acting early to address patterns of absence*

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent, preferably by 8.30 am. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that the child is safe. Parents must ensure that contact details are up to date and that a minimum of 2 emergency contacts are provided.

The school office will call to make contact:

- *If a child is absent and the parent has not contacted the school then, as part of our safeguarding policy*:
- *If there is no response to the call the office will try to make contact with the parent or carer and other emergency contacts. The purpose of this is to check on the safety of the child*
- *If it has not been possible to contact either the parent/carer or emergency contacts the school will give due consideration to making a home visit based on their knowledge of the child. If no contact has been made after 3 days, then a home visit will try to be made. (See the section 'Children Missing in Education').*

Pupils are expected to arrive between 8:45 am and 9:00am. Parents or carers are asked to contact the school if they are experiencing difficulties getting their child to school.

The Role of the School Staff

The Assistant Head monitors attendance together with the Attendance and Welfare Advisors who attend for 1.5 days per week and scrutinises the registers. Any families struggling are referred and support put in place. They will be signposted to Breakfast Club, which now opens at 7.30am and is free to all.

Class teachers or HLTAs complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Staff mark pupils present. The office attendance admin officers will mark late or absent children in the morning and afternoon and will telephone or text the parents of any absent children if they have not already made contact. It is the responsibility of the office attendance admin officers to ensure:

- *Attendance and lateness records are up to date*
- *If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence within 2 hours of the register having been taken. If no reason is provided, then the absence will be marked as 'unauthorised'*
- *Where there has been no communication, calls will continue to be made.*
- *When a reason has been provided the office staff ensure that the appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes – see appendix 2)*

Only the office staff, the SLT and the AWA can change attendance codes.

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, parents are expected to contact the school before 8.30 am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence.

1. Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
2. An appointment card or verification by the doctors/ dentist/hospital is required for medical appointments.
3. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
4. If a child is absent due to vomiting and/or diarrhoea then they should not return to school for the next 24 hours after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.
5. For more than three days of absence or where there is repeated absence due to illness, the school will request medical evidence (this can take the form of an appointment card or a copy of a prescription).
6. Where there are concerns about a child's attendance (particularly when it drops below 90%) the school will request medical evidence for any absence.

Moving School
If a family are moving out of the area there are a number of things we require them to do:

- *Notify us in writing at least 2 weeks in advance, including contact details for where they are moving to and if possible the details of the school their child will be attending*
- *Notify us when the child has started their new school*

We will also:

- *Request an email from the new school to confirm when the child started regardless of the country the new school is in*
- *If we do not hear from the family about their child's new school, we will contact the local authority where they have moved to find out whether the child is in school. If they are on the waiting list or have started school, we will request a confirmation email and off roll the child after one week following this confirmation*

Children Missing from Education (CME)

No child may be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Attendance Service.

If no reason has been given for a child's absence after 3 days and the school has not been able to contact parents/carers or any emergency contact, a home visit will be arranged. If a visit takes place and there is no one home the school may contact the police (having sought advice from the LA).

If a child has been absent from school for 2 weeks with no reason given, or if they have moved and no new school has contacted Marner, a referral is made to the CME team.

Lateness

At Marner Primary School the register is taken at 9.00 am and 1.00pm (Reception – Year 2) or 1.30 pm (Year 3 – Year 6). Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception. The pupil will be marked as late when registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9:20 am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'L'), pupils arriving after 9.20 am will be marked as 'U' which is an unauthorised absence.

Parents will be contacted by the school if their child is late regularly. If punctuality continues to be a concern the AWA and Assistant Head will meet with parents to discuss any issues which are causing lateness and how things can be improved.

Please note that persistent lateness after 9.30 when children are marked as 'U' may result in the local authority issuing a fixed penalty notice warning.

Leave of Absence

From September 2013 the Department for Education amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation, a letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

Marner School follows Tower hamlets Local Authority policy, which is zero tolerance to leave in term time. A written application form must be completed to request a leave of absence, the headteacher will give due consideration to the circumstances and the child's past attendance history. The application for leave of absence must include a return date. Children who return after the expected date will be reported to the local authority as a 'Child Missing in Education' and may be taken off the school roll if they have not returned within 21 days.
Where leave has been granted this will be marked 'C' in the register, where a family requests leave and it is not granted this will be marked as 'G'. Unauthorised holiday of 10 sessions (5 days) or more can result in the local authority issuing a fixed penalty notice.

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- *Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell*
- *Absence of siblings if one child is ill*
- *Oversleeping*
- *Confusion over school dates*
- *Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons*
- *Child's/family birthday*
- *Shopping trip*
- *Family Holidays*
- *Taking children for emergency visits in term time*
- *Absence of child as a result of another member of the family's illness or medical appointment*

Monitoring Attendance and Lateness

Our expectation is that a child's attendance is 96% or above at the end of the school year. The school closely monitors attendance and lateness to try to minimise poor attendance and punctuality through:

- *Staff speaking to parents and carers as and when concerns arise - (often on the gate)*
- *The AWA and SLT team contacting families whose attendance is below average to try to find ways to improve*
- *The Assistant Head writing to parents when attendance or punctuality does not improve*
- *The Assistant Head and AWA meet with parents*

The school monitors children's attendance when it drops below 96%. A series of letters is sent when attendance does not improve, approaches or drops below 90%.

Phone call – advising parent or carer that attendance is low and requesting medical evidence if appropriate and offering support.

Letter 1 – raising concerns that attendance has not improved and setting the expectation that all future absences need to be accompanied by medical evidence. Reminding parents of their legal obligations. This may be accompanied by a telephone call from the AWA.

Letter 2 – attendance panel meeting with the LA Attendance and Welfare and Assistant Head

What your child's attendance percentage means

Attendance Levels

CHILD'S ATTENDANCE	ACTION
96%+	**Excellent** attendance
94 – 95%	**Good** Well done – strive to build on this
Below 95%	**Causing concern** Children's attendance is below average. Parents need to work closely with the school to improve the situation. The children's attendance will be carefully monitored and families written to whenever there is no improvement and contact will be made.
Below 90%	**Possible penalty notice/legal proceedings** Any child whose attendance falls below 92% is regarded nationally as a child who has persistent absence. The Government is very concerned with this and has invested heavily to monitor the attendance of these children. Schools have targets to reduce the levels of persistent absence and the school and local authority work closely with families to support them in getting their child to school each day. However if a child's attendance does not improve next steps may include a penalty notice and possible legal proceedings –

Support from the school

The school understands that from time to time situations may arise which make it difficult for parents to ensure their child is in school. For example:

- *Housing issues*
- *Health issues*
- *Children's behavioural issues*
- *Financial issues*

Please let us know if there are issues which are affecting your child's attendance.

Local Authority Action

When there are concerns about a child's attendance and it does not appear to be improving, the school will refer to the local authority attendance service who may consider the following:

Education Welfare Officer Actions

This may include:

- Invitation to Attendance Panel meeting • Home visits • multi agency meetings • Sign *posting to supportive agencies e.g. • Early help • Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service. • Fast Track to Prosecution*

  Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance

- *Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct. • The Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded • If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)*

  Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:

- *Truancy • Parentally-condoned absences • Persistent lateness after the register has closed • Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.*

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £160 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Rewards and incentives

The pitch

The class with the best weekly attendance figures in each phase is awarded an extra session in the green pitch at lunchtime in Celebration Assembly on a Friday. The class with the second highest attendance in each phase is awarded an extra session in the green pitch at playtime.

'Init to win it'.

Each week in assembly children are part of 'Init to win it', which allows a child in each phase, who has 100% attendance for that week to win a 100% badge.

Other incentives

Class prizes of board games; sports equipment eg table tennis sets and bouncy castle.

Emails to parents

Parents are emailed at the end of term to congratulate them if their child achieves 100% and children are recognised in assembly.

Other policies to refer to: Marner Safeguarding Policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Present Codes:

**/ or ** (Present am or pm): Student is present in school during registration.

L (Late): Student arrived late before the register closed.

B (Educated off Site): Student is at an approved, supervised off-site educational activity.

K (Education provision provided by LA): Student is receiving education arranged by the local authority.

P (Sporting Activity (Approved)): Student is participating in a school-approved, supervised sporting activity.

V (Educational trip): Student is on a school-organised residential trip or supervised educational trip.

W (Work Experience): Students in the final two years of compulsory education are attending work experience.

Authorised Absent Codes:

C (Other Authorised Absence): Leave for exceptional circumstances.

C1 (Other Authorised Absence): Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad.

C2 (Other Authorised Absence): Pupils on part-time timetables.

J1 (Interview): Leave to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.

E (Excluded): Student is excluded but still on the admission register (up to the sixth consecutive day of a fixed period or permanent exclusion).

M (Medical/Dental Appointments): Absence due to medical or dental appointments that could not be scheduled outside school hours.

R (Religious Observance): Absence for religious observance on a designated day.

S (Study Leave): Study leave granted sparingly to Year 11 pupils for public exams, with students are still able to attend school for revision.

T (Traveller Absence): Used when Travellers are travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.

I (Illness): Used for any form of illness, including Covid-19 illness if not distinguished.

Unauthorised Absent Codes:

G (Family Holiday (Not Agreed)): Holiday not authorised by the school or exceeding the period determined by the headteacher.

N (No Reason): Reason for absence not provided; if no reason is provided after a reasonable time, it should be changed to O.

O (Unauthorised Absence): School is not satisfied with the reason given for absence.

U (Late (After Register Closes)): Student arrived after the register closed.

Codes that are not counted and don't affect attendance figures:

D (Dual Registration): Student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson (e.g. at a pupil referral unit).

Q (Lack of access arrangements): Applies when a pupil is absent because the local authority, responsible for home-to-school travel, has failed to provide it, or when the pupil must attend a school beyond walking distance that doesn't qualify for travel arrangements.

X (Non-statutory school age absence): Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend (for early years students before their 5th birthday).

Y1 (Unable to attend): Absence due to unavailable transport.

Y2 (Unable to attend): Absence due to widespread disruption to travel.

Y3 (Unable to attend): Absence due to part of the school being closed.

Y4 (Unable to attend): Absence due to unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures).

Y5 (Unable to attend): Absence due to pupils in the criminal justice system.

Y6 (Unable to attend): Absence due to public health guidance or law.

Y7 (Unable to attend): Any other unavoidable cause.

Z (Pupil Not On Roll): Used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining; schools must take attendance from the student's first scheduled day.

(School Closed To Pupils): Used for whole or partial school closures known or planned in advance, such as if the school is used as a polling station.

Appendix 2: School Illness Guidelines

Hand Washing - Please check that your child knows how to wash his/her hands thoroughly to reduce the risk of cross-infection. School attendance could be improved for all if children and families wash and dry their hands well five or more times a day. Please check if your child understands why they need to wash and dry their hands frequently.

Chickenpox - Stay off school until blisters have all crusted over or skin has healed, usually 5-7 days from onset of the rash.

Conjunctivitis/Ringworm - Seek medical advice.

Diarrhoea and/or vomiting - Stay off school for 48 hours after the last bout (this is 24 hours after the last bout plus 24 hours recovery time).

German measles/rubella - Return to school 6 days after rash appears but advise school immediately as any pregnant staff members need to be informed.

Head Lice - Please refer to Head Lice Policy.

Impetigo - Stay off school until the sores have crusted over and healed or 48 hours after commencing antibiotic treatment.

Measles - Stay off school for 4 days after a rash appears.

Mumps - Stay off school for 5 days after swelling appears.

Scabies - Your child can return to school once they have been given their first treatment although itchiness may continue for 3-4 weeks. All members of the household and those in close contact should receive treatment.

Scarlet Fever - Can return to school 24 hours after commencing appropriate antibiotic treatment.

Slapped cheek - No need to stay off school (infectious before rash), however,
school to be advised immediately as any pregnant staff members need to be informed.

Whooping cough - Stay off school until 5 days of antibiotics have been given, or 21 days from onset of illness if no antibiotic treatment has been prescribed.

Shingles - Stay off school only if rash is weeping and cannot be covered. School to be advised immediately as any pregnant staff members need to be informed.