



Maharishi School
Attendance Policy

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure progress and to enable children to unfold their full potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular attendance. Continuity enhances the educational experience.

We expect all children to attend every day when the school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect attainment in school and relationships with other children, together with the ability to form secure friendships.

The Governors and Headteacher, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at school.

Parental Responsibility

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

Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes puts pupils at risk. It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding matter so that all parties know that your child is safe.

Primary pupils are expected to arrive between 9:05 and 9:15am. A bell will ring and they will go to their class at 9:15am.

Secondary pupils are expected to arrive between 8:50 and 9:00am. A bell will ring and they will go to their class at 9:00am.

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a primary child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 9.00am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for the absence.

When a secondary child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 8.45am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for the absence

As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavor to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received about the reason for the absence.

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.

An appointment card or verification by the doctor/dentist/hospital etcetera may be required. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for an appointment, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

If your child is absent due to vomiting, they should not return to school for 48 hours after the last bout of sickness. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.

For more than three days of absence the school requires a written explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced.

Medical certificates are required for absences greater than five days.

Attendance levels - Our whole school attendance target to 2016-2017 is 96% (These gradings may be changed following updated guidance from the DfE)

96%+	Excellent!	This will help all aspects of a child's progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.
94-95%	Average.	Build on this and move to 96%+.
91-93%	Poor.	Absence is now probably affecting attainment and progress at school. School contacts parents/carers directly to seek ways of working together to improve attendance.
90% & Below	Unacceptable.	Absence is causing serious concern. It is affecting the attainment and progress of the pupil and their class. Meetings between home and school to share strategies for improvement will be called.

Children Missing Education

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Headteacher must be informed in writing. Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been notified. Children who stop attending are reported to the local authority attendance service.

Action for Lateness

A class register is taken at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. A pupil arriving late will be either:

- Marked as late before registration has closed (code 'L'); or
- Marked as late after registration has closed (code 'U') — this national code counts as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness is disruptive to learning and to the morning group meditation, both for the child concerned and the class. This will be discussed with parents. Frequent or regular lateness after registers have closed (code 'U') can provide grounds for prosecution or the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

Persistent late arrival could lead to the school making a referral to the attendance service for legal intervention. Parents would then receive a warning letter from the LA Attendance Service and a period of monitoring of their child's attendance would follow. If the monitoring period is failed, a Penalty Notice would then be issued.

Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

- **Authorised Absence:** An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. If, for example, a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence, this is considered an authorised absence.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy during the school day.
- Absences that have never been properly explained.
- Holidays not agreed.

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher (or delegated senior member of staff) can authorise absence for approved reasons. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation.

Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school. The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that will **NOT** be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill.
- Inadequate clothing/uniform.
- Confusion over school dates.
- Shopping trip.

Absence during term time for a holiday

Time off school for family holidays in term time may not be authorised. (Applications for authorised absence where dates are known ahead, are expected to be made at least four weeks in advance of the requested date.)

Schools have the discretion to authorise absence, for example:

- For service personnel who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education;
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during a crisis.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Unauthorised Holiday Absence

When the Attendance Service is notified that a request for a term time holiday has not been authorised a warning letter will be sent to the family.

If the unauthorised holiday takes place the Attendance Service issues a Penalty Notice (please note: the penalty notices are sent one per parent per child). Pupil absence for a holiday without prior approval is classified as unauthorised — authorisation cannot be granted retrospectively.

If a Penalty Notice is not paid, the Attendance Service may instigate court proceedings.

Attendance rates will be recorded on the termly report sent to parents.