

New Monkland Primary School



Getting it Right for Every Child

Attendance Policy



Written: April 2025
Review Date: August 2027

Pupil Attendance Policy

The school policy is in accordance with Scottish Government guidelines with ***Included, Engaged and Involved: Part 1: Attendance in Scottish Schools*** and NLC Management Circular B1 and the NLC Operational Policy for Managing Attendance and Absence April 2024.

Pupil Attendance at School

Section 30 of the 1980 Education Act places a duty on every parent of a child of school age to provide for him/her education either by regular attendance at a public school or some other means.

Pupils are marked present if they are in school.

They also should be marked present if they are directed by the school for various activities out of school. Reasons for being marked present out of school include:

- (a) Work experience
- (b) Educational visits
- (c) Day and residential visits to outdoor centre
- (d) College/consortium school study
- (e) Interviews and visits regarding higher and further education
- (f) Debates, sports, theatrical activities etc
- (g) Psychological services interviews
- (h) School medical examination
- (i) Home tuition

Pupil Absence from School

Parents are asked to inform the school by letter or telephone if their child is absent from school, confirming the reason for absence. The child would then be marked as Self Certified for the period of the absence.

Reasons for an authorised absence may include:

1. Illness, where no learning provision is made (including mental health and wellbeing concerns).
2. Medical and dental appointments (parent/carer and children and young people should be encouraged to arrange appointments outside school hours).
3. Meetings prior to and during court appearances and other legal processes.
4. Attendance at, or in connection with a Children's Hearing or Care Review, or appointment with another service working with the child or young person or family.
5. Religious observance.
6. Bereavement.
7. Weddings or funerals of close friends and family.
8. Arranged absence in relation to child or young person in Gypsy/Traveller families.
9. Participation in non-school based debates, sports, musical or drama activities agreed by the school.

10. Lack of transport (including due to bad weather).
11. Family recovery from exceptional domestic circumstances or trauma.
12. Authorised parental holiday.
13. Extended leave with parent/carer consent including some young carer activities.

Children will be marked as an unauthorised absence until a reason for the absence has been provided. If a child has a series of unexplained absences, the school and local authority has a duty to put a plan in place to support the child to engage more fully with school and promote good attendance.

Schools will record an absence as unauthorised when they perceive that there is no valid reason for the child being absent from school. Such absence may be:

1. Family holiday during term time.
2. Occasional absence without parent/carer awareness.
3. Longer term absence (home, community and school related issues).
4. Absence relating to substance and alcohol misuse.

Family holidays and the comparative costs relating to these is not accepted as a reason for these absences to be authorised. Family holidays during term time will be recorded as unauthorised, other than in exceptional circumstances which may include where a parent/carer's employment is of the nature where school holiday leave cannot be accommodated, such as the armed services, emergency services or professions where parents/cares are required to work away from home for prolonged periods.

For some children and young people reluctance to attend school can be related to a range of social and emotional issues such as:

1. Challenging family circumstances.
2. Coping with adversity or trauma.
3. Care experience.
4. Anxiety or mental health difficulties.
5. Bullying.
6. Issues relating to social media.

Schools will investigate to determine any underlying causes and take corrective action to address these barriers.

Implications for School Staff

- (a) If a child does not report for school by 09.30am and there has been no telephone call informing the school of absence, then the school office will be informed, and a text message will be sent to ascertain the cause of absence.
- (b) If an absence is longer than one week then a telephone call will be made to the parent/carer to discuss.
- (c) If several absences result over a period of time, then there is a possibility of prosecution.

Pattern/Frequent Absence Procedures

- (a) A Pupil Attendance Record will be issued to all parents with final reports at the end of the school year.
- (b) The Head Teacher will monitor registers on a monthly basis to detect frequency or patterns of lateness and absence.
- (c) Where there are concerns, an informal letter will be sent home inviting parents/carers to discuss the situation.
- (d) If the situation does not improve, support may be requested from partner agencies and the Cluster Family Engagement Support Assistant (FESA).
- (e) If concerns remain, a formal letter will be sent home advising parents of their responsibilities in line with Education (Scotland) Act 1980.
- (f) Assessment of wellbeing and associated multi-agency planning will help to ensure that the right support is offered at the right time to improve circumstances to increase attendance.

UNCRC Links

Article 3: All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

Article 4: The government has a responsibility to make sure your rights are protected. They must help your family to protect your rights and create an environment where you can grow and reach your potential.

Article 28: You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

Support for Parents/Carers

Make every day count: what can you do to help?

- Think about the impact of regular absences - missing school is missing learning and play.
- Try to arrange non-urgent dental and medical appointments outside school hours and if an appointment must be made within school hours, try to ensure your child is back at school as soon as possible.
- Establish routines at the start and end of the day so your child is prepared for the school day ahead; building up habits of punctuality and attendance. Your child's school may have a breakfast club which will support you.
- Talk to your child's school - ask questions and have regular discussions which support you and your child.
- Discuss any problems or difficulties with the school staff who are there to help and will be supportive. You have support from school staff, the Head Teacher and Cluster Integration and Improvement Lead (CIIL) for the cluster.
- Let the school know if your child is absent due to illness or other reason. This can be a call or text.

DID YOU KNOW

What should I do if my child is anxious or worried about going to school?

Your child has a right to an education and to be safe and happy at school. But sometimes children and young people can be anxious or worried about going to school due to many possible reasons.

You may think letting your child stay off school when they feel this way is the best option, however experience tells us it is better to talk to the school about this as soon as you can. Longer absences makes it harder for your child to return.

Your child's school staff are there to help. Your first point of contact should be the school. Staff in your child's school and the CIIL are keen to help and support you.

If you are unsure who to talk to in the school, ask to speak to the Head Teacher.

However there are also a number of agencies and services that can provide you with professional help and advice.

(Contact details can be found on the following page).

Support, information and advice

Parentline Scotland

At some time all parents find that parenting can be difficult or stressful. Parentline Scotland is the free, confidential, telephone helpline for anyone caring for a child in Scotland. You can call about any problem, however big or small. Phone: 0808 800 2222

On line at: www.childwelfare.org.uk/parentline-scotland

Parentzone

Parentzone provides information for parents and carers about how you can support your child's education.

On line at: www.educationscotland.gov.scot/parentzone

Childline

Children and young people can get confidential help about any question, concern or worry.

Phone: 0800 1111

On line at: www.childline.org.uk

Citizen Advice Bureau

Your local CAB can provide information and support about rights and responsibilities when it comes to schools and education. Information and advice on lots of areas at: www.adviceguide.org.uk where you can also find your local CAB.

Enquire

Enquire is the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning and operates a helpline for parents, carers and practitioners.

An interpreter can be arranged upon request.

Telephone helpline: 0845 123 3303

E-mail: info@enquire.org.uk

On line at: www.enquire.org.uk

ABEL

ABEL is a voluntary organisation that developed out of the strong desire of parents to do something for themselves to overcome the devastating effects that bullying can have on children, their families and their community. ABEL offers information and support to the young person being bullied and their family and the young person displaying the bullying behaviour and their family.

Contact them through their website at: www.anti-bullyingeastlothian.org.uk

National Parent Forum of Scotland

Provides parents with information and advice on understanding the new curriculum and supporting their child's education.

On line at: www.parentforumscotland.org



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

SUPPORT FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



EMPOWERING OUR CLUSTERS | **LEARN HERE**

Why is school attendance so important?

We want all our children and young people to realise their full potential.

Excellent attendance at school is important to allow your child to fulfil their potential and for them to have the best start and brighter future.

Below are just some of the key reasons why it is so important children attend school:

- To have fun and opportunities to experience new things
- To develop new skills for learning, skills for work and skills for life
- To understand responsibility
- To make new friends and build positive relationships
- To develop awareness of other cultures, religions, ethnicity and gender differences
- To celebrate achievements with friends and peers
- To attain in curricular pathways
- To build confidence, self-esteem and resilience
- To grow as individuals

Every school day counts

When you have a conversation with your child's school they will give you attendance in a percentage. This can be confusing. Have you considered the following:

100% attendance	0 Days missed	Gives your child the best opportunities in their learning and achievement
96% attendance	9 days of absence 1 week and 4 days of learning missed.	This will potentially impact on your child's progress in learning
90% attendance	18 days of absence 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed.	This will impact on your child's progress in learning, achievement and attainment.
85% Attendance	36 days of absence 7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed. This is almost a half term.	
80% Attendance	54 days of absence 8 weeks and 1 day of learning missed. Almost a whole term.	
75% Attendance	72 days of absence 9 weeks and 4 days of learning missed.	

DID YOU KNOW? NORTH LANKASHIRE

MISS SCHOOL MISS OUT

Did you know...?

There are **190 days** in each school year

That means there are **172 days** for learning, holidays, illnesses and appointments

90% attendance means your child **misses 19 days** of school each year

3 school days missed each month during your school life adds up to **1 whole year** of school lost

15 mins late every day = 2 weeks of lost learning each year.

In primary school there are **25 hours** of learning each week. **4 weeks absence = 100 hours** of learning missed.

Some children struggle. Find it hard to come to school. Tell the school as soon as you can if there is a problem.

Don't worry - You are not on your own. We are here to help and to work with you and your family.

Working Together we can do it and make sure your child does not **MISS OUT**

LEARN HERE



Is it ever alright for my child to be off school?

Your child can be off school if:

- They are ill
- They are attending a doctor or hospital appointment
- They are going to a meeting about a Children's Hearing or court, or if they are going to a Children's Hearing, case review or court
- If they are involved in an activity and the school agrees in advance
- Someone close to your child has died
- There is a crisis or serious difficulty at home or in your family
- They are going to a religious ceremony or a wedding of someone very close to them
- You are a Gypsy/Traveler family and while you go travelling you keep in touch with your child's teacher
- Your family is returning to a country of origin for cultural reasons or to care for a relative

As long as you have informed the school of the reason why your child is off, and the school is satisfied that this is a valid reason, these would be called authorised absences.

However this is still recorded as an absence for your child.

Top tips it's good to talk!

Any child currently avoiding school is likely to become nervous when they are asked about their worries or returning to school.

These questions can help to start the conversation about feelings and fears.

- What are the three best things about school?
- Would you prefer to talk, draw or write about it?
- What three things are you most worried about?