



Life in all its fullness

learning together, inspiring each other,
achieving our best

Marshfield CE VC Primary School

Whole School Attendance Policy

Policy Status & Version:	Statutory Policy — Revised & Updated for 2026/2027
Ratified by Governing Body:	October 2026 (Annual Review October 2027)
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Attendance Office & Admin:	Mrs M Williams & Mrs D Chambers (admin@marshfieldprimaryschool.org.uk)
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1. School Vision, Ethos & Attendance Culture

At Marshfield CE VC Primary School, we are constantly striving for excellence in all that we do by setting high expectations and working together as a school community to provide a happy, secure, and stimulating environment where children are motivated to learn, are valued as individuals, and are enriched by an experience that enables them to thrive in tomorrow's world.

In alignment with Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance, we recognise that regular school attendance is an essential foundation for pupil attainment, emotional wellbeing, personal development and safeguarding. Good attendance is a learned behavior that establishes lifelong patterns of responsibility. Departmental research demonstrates a direct correlation between attendance and academic success: at Key Stage 2, pupils meeting expected standards in reading, writing, and mathematics have significantly lower absence rates (3.5%) compared to those who do not meet expected standards (4.7%).

Our approach embraces the core DfE framework: **Expect, Monitor, Listen & Understand, Facilitate Support, Formalise Support, and Enforce**. Marshfield Primary School prioritises supportive partnership working with parents and carers to remove barriers to attendance, reserving statutory legal enforcement as a last resort when voluntary support is unengaged or unsuccessful.

2. Legal Framework & Governance Responsibilities

This policy is published in accordance with Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026), Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026), and South Gloucestershire Local Authority Attendance Guidance.

Parental Legal Duties

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age is legally responsible for ensuring that they receive efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. Where a pupil is registered at Marshfield Primary School, parents have a legal duty under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure their child attends school regularly, punctually, and for the full duration of every scheduled session.

School & Governing Body Responsibilities

- **The Governing Body:** Promotes an ambitious whole-school attendance culture, regularly reviews aggregated attendance data, challenges emerging trends, ensures staff receive adequate professional development, and holds school leaders accountable.
- **Headteacher & Senior Attendance Champion:** Sets the school attendance vision, oversees robust register management, leads data-driven analysis, coordinates multi-agency support, and manages targeting support meetings with the Local Authority.
- **Teaching & Support Staff:** Model high attendance expectations, maintain positive classroom environments, accurately take registers, and promptly flag pastoral or attendance concerns to the Senior Attendance Champion.

3. Registration, Punctuality & Daily Timings

The school gates open at **8:40 AM**. Morning registration opens at **8:45 AM** across all classrooms and closes at **8:50 AM**. Afternoon registration is taken at the start of the afternoon session.

End of school day collection timings:

- **3:25 PM:** Fruit Bat, Pangolin, and Snow Leopard classes.
- **3:30 PM:** Orangutan and Sea Turtle classes.

Punctuality & Register Coding

- **Late Arrival (Code L):** Pupils arriving between 8:50 AM and 9:00 AM are marked as 'Late before register closes' (Code L). This counts as present for statistical purposes, but patterns of lateness (e.g., 3+ times in 2 weeks) trigger informal parental contact.

- **Unauthorised Late (Code U):** In compliance with national regulations, the register closes 15 minutes after opening at 9:00 AM. Pupils arriving after 9:00 AM without an authorised medical or emergency reason are marked as 'Late after register closes' (Code U), which constitutes an unauthorised absence for the session and can trigger Penalty Notice procedures.

4. Absence Reporting, First-Day Calling & Safeguarding

If a pupil is unable to attend due to illness or an unavoidable emergency, parents must notify the school office by **9:00 AM** on the first day of absence either in person or by telephoning **01225 891246** and leaving a detailed message specifying the pupil's name, class, and exact nature of illness (e.g., high temperature, vomiting).

First-Day Calling Escalation Protocol

- **9:10 AM Check:** Admin team reviews morning electronic registers and identifies all unexplained absences.
- **First-Day Contact:** If no notification has been received, admin staff issue SMS alerts and phone primary contact numbers.
- **Emergency Contacts:** In compliance with KCSIE 2026, Marshfield Primary School maintains at least two emergency contacts per pupil. If primary contacts fail to respond, secondary emergency contacts are called.
- **Safeguarding Escalation:** Where a pupil is absent without explanation and school cannot establish contact, a welfare home visit may be conducted. If safety concerns persist, an immediate referral is made to the Access and Response Team (ART) or the Police.

Children Missing Education (CME) & Roll Deletion

A pupil will not be removed from the school admission register without joint enquiries between the school and South Gloucestershire Local Authority. In compliance with DfE regulations:

- **Ground H (Unreturned Leave of Absence):** Applied only after 10 consecutive school days past agreed leave where joint reasonable enquiries fail to locate the child or agree return is possible.
- **Ground I (Continuous Unauthorised Absence):** Applied only after 20 consecutive school days of continuous unauthorised absence (Codes G, N, O) following joint LA and school investigations.

5. Granting Leave of Absence (Statutory Policy & Rules)

In accordance with Regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and DfE statutory guidance, headteachers have no general entitlement to grant leaves of absence. Leave of absence during term time may **ONLY** be granted in **exceptional circumstances** and must be requested in advance using the school's official application form.

Statutory Grounds for Authorised Leave of Absence

Maintained schools can only grant leave of absence for specific statutory circumstances defined in national regulations:

- **Participating in Regulated Performance / Employment (Code C1):** Where a pupil participates in a licensed performance or regulated employment abroad under a licence issued by a Local Authority or Justice of the Peace.
- **Educational / Employment Interview (Code J1):** Where an application is made in advance to enable a pupil to attend an interview for entry to another educational institution or employment.
- **Study Leave (Code S):** Agreed in advance for public examination preparation (not applicable for internal mock examinations).
- **Temporary Part-Time Timetable (Code C2):** Where a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable has been agreed in writing between the school and parents for exceptional medical, mental health or reintegration reasons.
- **Exceptional Circumstances (Code C):** Granted solely at the discretion of the Headteacher (supported by governors) for rare, unforeseen, and genuine exceptional circumstances.

Term-Time Holidays & Non-Authorisation Criteria

The Department for Education strictly specifies that a need or desire for a holiday, family celebration, leisure, or recreation **does NOT constitute an exceptional circumstance**. Any family leave taken *without advanced Headteacher approval* will be recorded as an unauthorised holiday (**Code G**) and referred to South Gloucestershire Local Authority for Penalty Notice fine enforcement.

Furthermore, in accordance with DfE statutory rules, leave of absence will **never be granted** for a pupil to participate in protest activity during school hours.

Application Process & Notice Requirements

- **Advance Application Window:** Requests for leave of absence must be submitted to the Headteacher as early as possible and no less than 2 weeks (10 school days) prior to the proposed absence date.
- **Mandatory Request Form:** Parents/carers must complete the official Marshfield Primary School 'Leave in Term Time Request Form' (see Appendix A), fully detailing the exceptional circumstances.
- **Individual Case Assessment:** Each application is evaluated individually on its specific facts and background context. Marshfield Primary School does not operate blanket policies or automatic approvals.
- **Discretion & Retrospective Requests:** The Headteacher determines the duration of any granted leave. Leave cannot be granted retrospectively under any circumstances.

6. Penalty Notices & Statutory Legal Enforcement

Where voluntary support measures fail or are unengaged, or where unauthorised term-time leave occurs, Marshfield Primary School works in direct partnership with South Gloucestershire Local Authority to enforce regular attendance through statutory legal measures.

National Threshold for Penalty Notice Issuance

In line with the National Framework for Penalty Notices (effective August 2024), a Penalty Notice must be considered when a registered pupil reaches **10 unauthorised sessions (equivalent to 5 school days)** within a rolling period of **10 school weeks**. A school week is defined as any week in which at least one school session occurs, and the 10-week window can span terms or academic years.

The national threshold can be met through any combination of unauthorised absence codes:

- **Code G:** Unauthorised family leave / holiday taken in term time.
- **Code O:** Unauthorised absence where reason is not accepted by the school or unverified.
- **Code U:** Arriving late after the register closes at 9:00 AM.
- **Combined Unauthorised Sessions:** E.g., 4 sessions of Code G holiday plus 6 sessions of Code U late arrivals within 10 school weeks.

Notice to Improve (Improvement Window)

Where the national threshold is met and support is deemed appropriate, but the family has failed to engage, the school or LA may issue a formal **Notice to Improve**. This provides parents with a final **3 to 6 week improvement period** to engage with support and secure regular attendance before a Penalty Notice fine is formally levied.

National Fine Structure & 3-Year Escalation Framework

Penalty Notices are issued per parent, per child by South Gloucestershire Council in accordance with national statutory rates:

Offence Level	Fine Amount & Payment Window	Statutory Rule & Escalation
First Penalty Notice (within 3 years)	£160 if paid within 28 days (Reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days)	Standard initial fine per parent, per child.
Second Penalty Notice (within 3 years)	£160 flat rate (No reduction for early payment)	Applies to same parent for same child within 3 rolling years.
Third Offence (within 3 years)	Penalty Notice CANNOT be issued. Direct Prosecution in Magistrates' Court.	Case proceeds to legal court prosecution under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Court Prosecution & Legal Penalties

Where non-payment occurs or where a third offence is committed within 3 years, South Gloucestershire Council initiates statutory prosecution:

- **Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 (Standard Offence):** Carries a fine of up to Level 3 (£1,000) per parent.
- **Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996 (Aggravated Offence):** Carries a fine of up to Level 4 (£2,500) per parent, a Community Order, and/or up to 3 months' imprisonment.

7. National Attendance & Absence Coding Framework

Marshfield Primary School utilizes the statutory DfE national attendance codes (School Attendance Regulations 2024). Registers are legal documents preserved for 6 years.

Code	Category / Description	Statutory Criteria & Usage Rules
/ or \	Present AM / PM	Physically present in class during registration.
L	Late before register closes	Arrives between 8:50 AM and 9:00 AM; counts as present.
U	Late after register closes	Arrives after 9:00 AM; counts as unauthorised absence.
I	Illness (physical or mental)	Parent notification accepted; medical evidence not routinely required.
M	Medical / Dental appointment	Requested in advance; encourage appointments outside school hours.
N	Reason not yet established	Temporary code; must be updated within 5 days or converted to O.
O	Unauthorised absence	Reason not accepted by school or unverified after 5 days.
G	Unauthorised holiday	Term-time family leave taken without advance Headteacher authorisation.
C	Exceptional circumstance leave	Authorised Headteacher leave for rare exceptional circumstances.
C1	Regulated performance / work	Licensed performance or employment abroad.
C2	Part-time timetable leave	Temporary agreed reduced timetable leave.
Q	Lack of LA transport	Statutory LA home-to-school travel duty not provided.
Y1–Y7	Unavoidable causes	Transport failure (Y1), travel disruption (Y2), premises closure (Y3/Y4), public health (Y6).
X	Not compulsory school age	Under 5

8. Graduated Intervention & Support Pathway (LAIM Integration)

Marshfield Primary School follows a structured 4-stage graduated intervention process integrated with South Gloucestershire Council's Legal Attendance Intervention Management (LAIM) framework:

Stage 1: Universal Prevention & Early Concern (>96%)

- **Monitoring:** Termly Headteacher audits (6 times per year) and daily admin register checks.
- **Communication:** Attendance percentages shared at October and February Parents' Evenings; certificates issued end of Terms 2, 4, and 6.
- **Early Concern Letter:** Issued when attendance drops below 96%, or if 2+ broken weeks or persistent lateness occur.
- **Early Concerns Meetings:** Arranged with parents/carers when attendance drops below 92%.

Stage 2: Targeted Support Plan (Rising Absence / Complex Barriers)

Where absence persists, the school convenes an Attendance Plan Meeting to co-produce a support plan utilizing:

- **Student Voice Mapping:** Capturing pupil perspectives on school barriers.
- **Individual Health Care Plans (IHCP):** Formulated for chronic health conditions with signed medical consent.
- **EBSA & Belonging Toolkits:** Deployed for anxiety-driven school avoidance.
- **Multi-Agency Support:** Referrals to Family Link Worker, School Nurse, CAMHS, and Early Help (EHAP).

Stage 3: Formal Attendance Contract & Multi-Agency Action

- **Attendance Contract:** Formal written contract between parent, school, and LA detailing support and commitments.
- **Formal Reviews:** Conducted regularly; case reviewed at LA Targeting Support Meetings.

Stage 4: Statutory Legal Intervention & Prosecution

- **Statutory Measures:** Notice to Improve, Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders (ESO), or Section 444 Prosecution.

9. Vulnerable Cohorts, Safeguarding & Medical Needs

Pupils with SEND & Long-Term Health Needs

Attendance ambitions remain high for all pupils. Reasonable adjustments under Section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 are implemented where appropriate (e.g., routine adaptations, uniform adjustments). Where a pupil misses **15 consecutive or cumulative school days** due to illness, Marshfield Primary

School submits a statutory **Sickness Return** to South Gloucestershire Local Authority to ensure joint educational provision.

Children with a Social Worker & Young Carers

Unexplained absences for pupils with a social worker are reported immediately to the social worker and Virtual School Head. Young carers are identified on the school census, and LA Young Carer's Needs Assessments are requested under Section 17ZA Children Act 1989.

Operation Encompass & Domestic Abuse

In compliance with KCSIE 2026, Marshfield Primary School receives police notifications via Operation Encompass following domestic abuse incidents, ensuring immediate, discrete pastoral support is arranged.

Leave in term time request form

Please read the following important guidance before making a request:

The current law **does not give any entitlement to parents/carers to take their children on holiday during term time**. Any applications for leave must be made in **exceptional circumstances** and the head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. Absence from school without the head teacher's permission will be classed as unauthorised absence and may lead to the issuing of a Penalty Notice (fine).

There have been changes to the Penalty Fine Criteria which have been enforced from 19th August 2024. Penalty Notices are requested by schools and academies and issued by the Local Authority to the parents/carers of statutory school age children, per parent, per child. For example: two children in a family absent from school for a leave of absence may result in each parent receiving a Penalty Notice for each child at the below rates.

- There will be a new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered.
- The new rules mean you will no longer be able to take your child out of school for one week's holiday without a penalty notice being issued.
- There will be an increase in the penalty fine from £60 to £80 if paid in 21 days. If the fine is not paid by the first 21 days, it will rise to £160 if paid within 28 days of being issued. If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
- If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them.

Please be aware that family holiday even if felt by parents/carers to be educational activity, **will not be authorised by the school**.

Further information on school attendance and penalty notices can be found on the South Gloucestershire Council website.

Name of student:	Date of birth:	Year:
Period(s) of absence requested:		
From:	To:	No of days:
Please fully explain the exceptional circumstances that you would like the school to consider. This section must be completed. Please continue a separate sheet if needed.		
Name of parent(s) / Carer:		
Name of the adult your child is on holiday with (if different from above):		

Signature of parent(s)/ Carer:	Date:
Email address and phone number:	

For internal admin use only:

Student name:

Date form received:		Current attendance (%)
Total number of days requested for absence during current academic year:		
Dates requested	From:	To:
No of Days		No of Sessions
Safeguarding paperwork completed and returned Y (For sporting requests for absence) NA		
Shared with governors:		
Reply letter sent:		Arbor:

Authorised: Request to be authorised and letter sent to parents,

Unauthorised: Request to be unauthorised and letter to be sent to parents ASAP
(NB – if you proceed to take the holiday this may result in a penalty notice being issued)

Signed Position

Date.....