Attendance Policy

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Version	Reviewed	Changes since last version
1		Existing
2	November 2022	No updates, part of annual review
3	November 2023	Section 3.2 of policy updated

1. Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the DfE's latest guidance on attendance:

- School Attendance Parental Responsibilities Measures
- School Attendance Guidance for Maintained Schools, Academies, Independent Schools and Local Authorities

Should include: Extended Leave, how to complete registers, the school's procedures on dealing with CME (Children Missing in Education), how pupils' attendance will be monitored, how pupils will be taken of role, how the policy is monitored.

2. School Attendance Aims

Mulberry Academy Shoreditch (MAS) 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.

The school's internal attendance target for its pupils is 98%.

3 School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and again during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils are expected to be on school site by 8.38am at the latest and expected to be present for registration at 8.40am. If a pupil arrives after 8.40am, they will be marked late by their registration teacher until 9.00am, when registration closes. Pupils arriving after 9.00 must sign in through the reception office

Registration also occurs in the afternoon.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents can let the school know by telephone, email or by sending a note with siblings that a child is ill or any other reason for absence. The school should be informed again if the absence continues on each day of absence.

Absence due to illness will be authorized for two consecutive days, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. After two days of absence due to medical evidence will be required and any absence after this time will be <u>unauthorized</u>.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this when a decision is made to unauthorise an absence.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents can let the school know by sending a copy of the appointment card or letter or by bringing this into the school personally so that a member of staff can take a photocopy for the child's records.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorize such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives to school after 8.40am will be marked as late using the 'L' code.

If students are late twice in one week, they will asked to go to the hall where they will be supervised and given work to complete.

A text message goes out to every child that is marked late by 11.30am at the latest. The Attendance & welfare Advisor monitors punctuality every half term and may also contact parents by letter/phone call for one to one meetings.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Where no contact is received from parents, Mulberry Academy Shoreditch will try to make contacts with parents by text message, phone calls or where necessary by undertaking home visits.

A home visit will automatically take place if a student has been absent for two consecutive days without a valid reason given by parents/carers.

Mulberry Academy Shoreditch will utilize resources available to the school including external agencies such as the Attendance & Welfare Advisor, Police and Social Care to ascertain a child's whereabouts where sufficient concerns may arise due to no contact from parent.

3.6 Reporting to parents

All parents are informed about a child's attendance and punctuality during the parents' evenings and reports (twice a year). The Attendance Team and Heads of Years will also make contact with parents/carers whenever concerns arise or patterns are noticed in relation to attendance and punctuality.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The principal may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the principal's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence

may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. In this is the case, a referral will be sent to the Behaviour & Attendance Support Team (London Borough of Tower Hamlets)

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may consider:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

MAS will recognise good and improved attendance through:

- Daily late/absence text is sent out.
- Attendance Teams attempts to contact parents where child is absent or no information is received by 9.30am.
- Parents will be contacted by a member of the Attendance Team/Year teams as soon as concerns/patterns are noticed.
- verbal and written praise,
- form tutor acknowledging improved attendance/efforts through praise,
- Public acknowledgement (certificates, etc.)
- Head of Year, Deputy principal/Principal will be informed of improved attendance

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance team monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health. Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above five days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an Attendance & Welfare Advisor.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The Attendance & Welfare Advisor undertakes an Annual Register Inspections (usually at the end of November) and an Annual Attendance Analysis report.

In addition, the attendance team produce a half termly summary report on attendance.

These are used to identify and track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Deputy Principal

The Deputy Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Deputy Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with Attendance & welfare Advisor to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office/reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Deputy Principal. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day