



Maghull High School

PUPIL ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Person responsible for Policy: Deputy Headteacher

Reviewed: 5th October 2018

Date of next review: September 2021 – This policy is to be reviewed every 3 years (major changes will be brought to the governors' attention as and when they occur)

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS POLICY HAS BEEN DELEGATED TO THE DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

MAGHULL HIGH SCHOOL

PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Maghull High School is committed to providing challenge and support for all pupils to achieve their best.

High levels of attendance and punctuality are essential for pupils to work to their full potential, be successful and benefit from the opportunities available to them at school. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly.

Achieving high attendance is a necessity in preparing pupils for future working life as an adult. Pupils should be at the School, **on time and every day** that school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that parents and carers recognise the responsibility and obligation they have to make sure that pupils attend regularly. This policy sets out how the School, its partners and Parents/Carers can work together to achieve this.

1.1 The Importance of Regular Attendance:

Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence additionally disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring pupils' regular attendance at school is the **legal responsibility of Parents/Carers. By law, all children of compulsory school age must attend school.** Poor attendance not only undermines a child's education and future life chances but it can also put children at risk, can compromise personal safety and encourage anti-social behaviour. Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

1.2 Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a habit of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – Parents/Carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To maintain a focus on this the School will:

- Report to Parents/Carers regularly on how their child is performing at school. This will include information about their attendance and punctuality.
- Celebrate good attendance in assemblies on a regular basis, through daily Tutor Time and by displaying individual and class achievements;

- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates, events and trips, both in and outside of school.

2.0 ABSENCE PROCEDURES

2.1 If a student is absent parents should:

- Contact school by 9am ideally on the first day of absence; the dedicated telephone number is 0844 477 3438 or through Connect Ed.
- Send a note in on the first day that the student returns with an explanation of the absence – Pastoral Administrator.
- For absences that extend to a week (5 school days) some form of medical evidence is required; this can be in the form of a Doctor's note/copy of a prescription/sight of prescribed medication/completed school form.

2.2 If a student is absent the school will:

- Endeavour to telephone or text Parents/Carers on the first day of absence if a message (that explains the absence) has not been received;
- Invite Parents/Carers into school to discuss the situation with the Pastoral Manager if absences persist.

2.3 Telephone numbers:

- There are times when school will need to contact parents for a range of issues, including absence, so it is essential that the school has up to date contact numbers at all times. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year and we ask Parents /Carers to inform us of any changes.

3.0 LATENESS

- Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If pupils are late at the start of the day they can miss assemblies, work, vital information and news for the day and do not spend time with their Form Tutor. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. Persistent poor punctuality will result in sanctions being applied e.g. an attendance or punctuality detention and potentially a contract.

3.1 How we manage lateness:

- at **8.50** the school day starts and pupils are expected to be **in Form Tutor time** at that time.
- from **8:30** pupils can access the Dining Room.
- at **9.15** the registers are closed.

In accordance with the Regulations, if pupils arrive after **9.30** they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an **unauthorised absence**. This may mean that Parents/Carers could face the possibility of legal proceedings if the problem persists.

If a student has a persistent late record, Parents/Carers may be asked to meet with the Assistant Progress Leader to resolve the problem. Parents/Carers can approach the school at any time if they experience problems getting their child to the school on time.

4.0 UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCES

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the Parents/Carers), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**.

Registers are taken twice a day by staff to record attendance marks. Registers are legal documents so the school staff are obliged to complete them accurately. Attendance marks are also recorded at every lesson to monitor student punctuality and guard against truancy, this is to ensure safety of children. Information about the cause of any absence is always required from Parents/Carers, preferably in writing.

4.1 Authorised

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in School time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes. Medical appointments, if possible, should be made as late in the day as possible to allow your child to be registered for the afternoon. Medical appointments should not take all day.

4.2 Unauthorised

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave of absence" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/Carers keeping children off unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark. (**Registers close at 9.15am** each day).
- a child arriving late after that time will be recorded as U (unauthorised).
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- oversleeping
- absent to look after an unwell sibling
- inadequate uniform
- confusion over term dates
- whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school.
- any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between school, parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, Parents/Carers should not condone their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending as this gives the child the impression that attendance does not matter.

5.0 EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE IN TERM TIME

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off during school term time to have exceptional leave. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

5.1 Holiday during Term Time

It is the school's policy not to grant holidays in term time.

5.2 Exceptional Leave

Pupils have a total of 13 weeks holiday a year so Parents/Carers should only request that they be able to take their child out of school under **exceptional circumstances**. This is known as exceptional leave and must be applied for in writing addressed to the Headteacher. In this letter Parents/Carers should make clear the reasons why it is necessary to take their child(ren) out of school and why these are exceptional. Taking holidays in term time will affect a student's education and is not acceptable. All application letters for exceptional leave must be made two weeks in advance of the event.

It is at the discretion of the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher that **a maximum of 5 days in any academic year may be authorised**. In making a decision the Headteacher will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

6.0 PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA) [As per Government guidance]

When a student becomes a 'persistent absentee' the Local Authority has to be notified. This applies when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will do considerable damage to any child's educational prospects. The school expects parents' full support and co-operation to tackle this.

This could involve Parents/Carers coming to an Attendance Panel at school to develop an Individual Attendance Plan to improve the situation.

If student attendance still fails to improve this becomes a **Serious Behaviour Concern**. The school will then use a range of strategies to resolve the situation.

These include:

- Multi-Agency Meeting (Social Care, School Nurse, CAMHS, Youth Offending Team, Young Carers etc.)
- EHAT
- Fixed Term penalty for Parent/Carer
- Educational Supervision Order (Magistrates Court)
- Prosecution of Parent/Carer (Magistrates Court)

All absence is monitored thoroughly and regularly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority. Parents/Carers will be informed of the concern immediately. We automatically inform Parents/Carers when absence passes 5%. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. This is combined with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

In most cases an **Attendance Improvement Programme (AIP)** will be put in place. This will involve Parents/Carers.

7.0 PENALTY NOTICE PROCEEDINGS

Penalty Notices for absence from school can be issued by the Attendance and Welfare Service based on requests from schools. Maghull High School follows the most recent 'Procedures for Issuing Education-related Penalty Notices' from Sefton Council (April 2015).

The circumstances in which a penalty notice for non-attendance may be issued include:

- Parentally condoned absence
- Unauthorised leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Unwarranted delayed return from leave of absence (without school agreement)
- Persistent late arrival after the register has closed
- Part of the legal process between the school and Local Authority (i.e. at Attendance Panel Reviews)
- Truancy, including attendance and exclusion sweeps (formerly truancy sweeps).

A minimum evidential requirement of ten (10) school sessions lost to unauthorised absences by any pupil in the current term **and/or** eighteen (18) sessions lost to unauthorised absence over two consecutive terms will be required to trigger the process.

Payment of a penalty within 21 days of receipt of the notice is £60 for each parent. Payment after this time, but within 28 days of receipt of the notice is £120, **[The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013]**.

Penalty Notices may also be issued if pupils who are excluded appear in a public place without good reason.

Following a request by the school for the issuing of a Penalty Notice a check is made by the Attendance and Welfare Service to ensure that the request meets the terms of the Code of Conduct.

Parents/Carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. The Pastoral Manager and Key Stage Directors will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist we will invite the Parent/Carer to a School Attendance Panel. At this meeting strategies will be discussed to improve attendance.

Should the situation continue, the Pastoral Manager may seek advice from the Local Authority in respect of any legal proceedings.

9.0 CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION

No child will be removed from roll without consultation between the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. If a child is missing from education with prolonged absences that are unexplained or if a family moves away from the area but does not register with another school, the school will alert the Local Authority who will then take action according to the Child Missing in Education Policy and procedures. Movement of children between Local Authorities and schools is tracked nationally.

10.0 PUBLICATION OF ATTENDANCE FIGURES

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to Parents/Carers and to promote attendance.

Maghull High School

School Attendance Policy

We follow a staged approach to addressing attendance and punctuality concerns using the following procedure:

1. The School Attendance Panel (SAP) meets on a monthly basis but follows a two week agenda order. Week 1 is gathering together the information from staff and pupils before making decisions on a specific pupil's progression through the programme. Week 2 is collecting the data for attendance and disseminating it to the Senior Leadership team (SLT).

This allows an opportunity for those mentioned to either halt a pupil's progression through the programme or alternatively to 'fast-track' a pupil to a greater stage.

The monitoring programme begins when a pupil's attendance reaches below 95% for the last 13 weeks (this may include days within a previous academic year or term).

At this point, it is likely the Assistant Progress Leader will speak with the child directly in order to make them aware of their attendance figure. This is to ensure that the pupil has the quantifiable information and give them an opportunity to request support if needed.

2. Once a pupil's attendance goes below 90%, a letter will be sent to Parents/Carers to inform them of their child's current attendance figure. It will also request that they contact the Assistant Progress Leader to discuss absences and support that may be needed.
3. Parents/Carers will be requested to attend a meeting at the school where members of the SAP will discuss the child's concerning attendance figures and the impact it is likely to be having on their education and social development. At this meeting, the role of the Local Authority (LA) and their Attendance Panel will also be discussed.

A referral to the LA will be made.

From September 2015, there is an opportunity to make a recommendation to the LA for them to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. Previously, the LA Panel Committee decided upon the most fitting course of action, in terms of supporting the young person's attendance.

We will have the option to refer a pupil to the LA Panel in the original context or to invoke the penalty process.