

MANCHESTER HEALTH ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approval History

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Revision History

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1. Purpose

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. The purpose of this policy is therefore to provide guidance on the Academy's approach to secure good school attendance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students attending Manchester Health Academy.

3. Responsibility

3.1 Manchester Health Academy believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, students and the wider school community. **As such, the Governing Body will:**

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to Students and their parents
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

3.2 **The Leadership Team will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to Students and their parents
- Form positive relationships with Students and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all Students to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.

- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required and on time.
- Report the Academy's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support Students and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

3.3 **Year Leaders/Subject Leaders/Form Tutors will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents.
- *Ensure that a pupil's own attendance percentage is regularly updated in the student planner (weekly)*
- Form positive relationships with students and parents.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all Students to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation.
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site.
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

3.4 **Request that parents will:**

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before

- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time, where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Principal in advance of booking the holiday

4. Our Approach

- 4.1 Manchester Health Academy believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.
- 4.2 Manchester Health Academy values all students. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.
- 4.3 Manchester Health Academy recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and Special Educational Needs. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

5. Legal Framework

- 5.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 5.2 A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.
- 5.3 Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.
- 5.4 The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.
- 5.5 The register must record whether the Student was:
- present;
 - absent;
 - present at approved educational activity; or
 - unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

6. Categorising Absence

- 6.1 Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- 6.2 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.
- 6.3 Parents should advise the Academy by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.
- 6.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:
- 6.4.1 Illness: In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.
- 6.4.2 Medical/Dental Appointments: Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, Students should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.
- 6.4.3 Other Authorised Circumstances: This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.
- 6.4.4 Excluded (No alternative provision made): Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. *The Year Leader* will make arrangements for work to be sent home.
- 6.4.5 Leave of Absence: *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force on 1 September 2013, changing the rules about term-time holidays. Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. If the headteacher grants leave, the number of days the child can be away from school will be determined by that headteacher.*
- All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:
 - The expected date of return
 - That parents must contact school should any delays occur
 - That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected
 - If a student fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the student off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 – *An application to the LA can be made for a CME (Child missing in Education)*. This means that the child will lose their school place.

- If the permission to take leave is not granted and the student still goes on holiday, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may issue a Penalty Notice.
- Only **exceptional circumstances** will be agreed. In such cases, consideration will also be given to cultural needs and family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin. In these cases granting leave for longer periods than normal may be considered justified. In all cases though, parents will be required to justify why the holiday needs to be taken during term time.

6.4.6 Religious Observance: Manchester Health Academy acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

- It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.
- Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.
- However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

6.4.7 Study Leave: Study leave may be granted for Year 11 Students once GCSE examinations have commenced *(in accordance with LA guidelines).* The Academy will offer in school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels.

6.4.8 Traveller Absence: The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

- To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.
- It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.
- When in or around Manchester, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.
- Manchester Health Academy will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the Student must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the Student's school place at Manchester Health Academy will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

- Manchester Health Academy can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:
 - advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
 - inform the school regarding proposed return dates
- Manchester Health Academy will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.
- Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:
 - The child is on roll and attending another visited school
 - Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
 - The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced
- Where Traveller children are registered Students at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any Student.

6.4.9 Late Arrival: Registration begins at 8.40am, students arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9.10am (*no more than thirty minutes after the opening of the register*) Students arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

- On arrival after the close of register, students must immediately report to the Student Desk to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.
- The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.
- The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the student has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

6.4.10 Unauthorised absence: Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A student's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school

7. Deletions from the Register

- 7.1 In accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:
- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
 - The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
 - The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
 - Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
 - Death of a Student
 - Transfer between schools
 - Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
 - Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
 - A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
 - In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
 - 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student
 - Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
- 7.2 Manchester Health Academy will follow Manchester City Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a student's whereabouts is unknown.

8. Using Attendance Data

- 8.1 Student's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.
- 8.2 *Every week the Attendance Officer* will provide all form tutors/class teachers with attendance data for the previous four weeks for each student within their form group/class.
- 8.3 The Senior Leadership Team and Curriculum Leaders will receive a complete set of data.
- 8.4 *The Assistant Principals' who have responsibility for specified year groups, will receive a weekly report from the Attendance Officer indicating actions for targeted students.*
- 8.5 This student level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 1).
- 8.6 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.
- 8.7 Manchester Health Academy will share attendance data with the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the local authority as required.
- 8.8 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

9. Support Systems

- 9.1 Manchester Health Academy recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.
- 9.2 Manchester Health Academy also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee students and looked after children.
- 9.3 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:
- Discussion with parents and Students
 - Attendance panels
 - Parenting contracts
 - Attendance report cards
 - Referrals to support agencies
 - Learning mentors
 - Student Voice Activities
 - Friendship groups
 - PSRCE and tutorial sessions
 - Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials
 - Family learning
 - Reward systems
 - Time limited part time time-tables
 - Additional learning support
 - Behaviour support
 - Inclusion units
 - Reintegration support packages
- 9.4 Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and Students.
- 9.5 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Manchester Health Academy will consider the use of legal sanctions.

10. Legal Sanctions

- 10.1 Prosecution: Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The Academy will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

- 10.1.1 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered Student at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.
- 10.1.2 A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.
- 10.1.3 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.
- 10.2 Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003): A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent. It can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.
- 10.2.1 The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.
- 10.2.2 The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.
- 10.2.3 Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Parenting Contract Protocol.
- 10.3 Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003): Penalty Notices will be considered when:
- A student is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school
 - A student has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve
- 10.3.1 A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £50 fine is paid within 28 days or £100 if paid within 42 days of the date the Notice was issued.
- 10.3.2 Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- 10.3.3 Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.
- 11. *Students with attendance below 90% - PA (Persistently Absent)***
- 11.1 Students who have attendance below *90%* are considered to be persistently absent from school. To ensure that intervention is focused and meets the needs of individuals, students will be grouped in to one of the following categories:
- Looked After Children and Children on the Child Protection Register
 - Special Educational Needs
 - School age parents/expectant parents
 - Long term non attendance
 - Parental support/needs e.g. parental drug use, young carers, domestic violence
 - School issues e.g. bullying, poor teacher/Student relationship, curriculum issues
 - Offended or have an Anti-Social Behaviour Order

- English as an Additional Language
 - Ethnic minority
 - Mid Year Admissions
 - Gifted and Talented
 - Other
 - Obtain records of previous contact and interventions as set out in RED - AMBER and escalate accordingly
 - Ensure that weekly contact occurs with the student either individually or within a small group to address themed issues. This contact should also include the use of SEAL materials.
 - Ensure that weekly contact with the parents to discuss any arising issues and to provide feedback on their child's attendance, behaviour and academic progress.
 - Set an individual attendance target for the student that will see the student move to the band above.
 - Review existing plans and co-ordinate school resources to support the student's attendance and any additional needs
 - Be the key contact person for any external agency working with the student
 - Input into whole school strategies to address the needs of students within their group
- 11.2 Each identified member of staff will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all intervention and outcomes. Records will be copied to a member of the Senior Leadership Team and Principal every weeks at the *Behaviour & Attendance Group meeting (BAGS). *
- 11.3 Attendance will be a standing item on the agenda of the Senior Leadership Team meetings *& BAGS* meetings where the progress of these groups will be reported and the effectiveness of interventions measured. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies and will also have links to performance management.
- 11.4 The Principal will report to the Chair of Governors/Governor for Attendance each half term and will report termly to the Governing Body.

12. Related Documents

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Attendance Distributed Leadership Model

