



Manchester Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

Manchester Academy
School Attendance Policy
2018 – 2019

Manchester Academy

School Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

Manchester Academy believes 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.

Manchester 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.

Manchester 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. This policy also takes into account the *Human Rights Act, 1998*, the *Disability Discrimination Act, 1995* and the *Race Relations Act, 2000*.

2. Legal Framework

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.

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.

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.

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.

The register must record whether the student was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

3. Categorising Absence

Manchester Academy strives to ensure that students attend school 100% of the time, however where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

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. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

From September 2015, any student who has an attendance percentage of 90% or below is considered to be **persistently absent** from school and timely actions and monitoring will be instigated.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation which has been accepted as such by the school. Manchester Academy strives to have unauthorised absences closed off within two weeks. Some 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;

Illness

Parents should advise school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide an expected date of return. They should then contact school daily until their child has returned to school.

This should be followed up with a note from the parent on their child's return. Occasionally a verbal explanation will be accepted. However, 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 or Doctor's note.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents are advised to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, we ask students who know in advance of appointments to bring a note from parents and proof of appointments to Student Services. Medical appointments taken without evidence being provided will not be authorised.

Leave of Absence during term time, including compassionate leave and Other Authorised Circumstances

Schools are no longer able to authorise requests for leave of absence during term time other than in exceptional circumstances. Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school for the purpose of a holiday and should be aware that if their child is absent for ten school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year.

All requests for leave of absence should be made in writing to the Principal clearly stating the dates requested but prior to bookings being made and at least four weeks prior to travel. Each request will be considered individually.

Once the request is received parents will be invited to attend a meeting in school to discuss the request further. This does not mean the leave of absence will be automatically authorised. Each request will be considered individually and will take into account the following factors:

- Length of the proposed leave;
- Age of the student;
- The student's general absence/attendance record;
- The student's current attainment standards;
- Proximity of SATs and public examinations;
- The student's ability to catch up the work missed;
- The student's educational needs;
- General welfare of the student;
- Circumstances and frequency of the request;
- Purpose of the leave;
- Previous term time holidays taken;
- When the request was made;

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing by the School Attendance Officer. If a request has been granted the letter will request that parents provide:

- The expected date of return;
- Daily contact with school should any delays occur;
- Emergency contact details ;

Parents will also be made aware that a student's school place may be withdrawn if he/she does not return to school on the expected day.

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. If permission to take any leave of absence is not granted and the student still goes off

on leave, the absence will be unauthorised and Manchester Academy will request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice for each child for each responsible adult and/or possible prosecution.

Excluded (No Alternative Provision Made)

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded student from the sixth day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Religious Observance

Manchester 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. In order to maintain high standards of attendance for all students, Manchester Academy arranges INSET days on the school calendar to fit around Eid and Ramadan. **However, there may be occasions when this is not possible and we would request that parents put requests for leave of absence for religious observance in writing.** It is expected that students will return to school after the day of religious observance/ INSET day/s as any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

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. This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with Manchester Academy in advance.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duty 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 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 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 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 school of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

Manchester 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 any student.

Late Arrival

Registration begins at 8.30: students arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. A student arriving after the register has closed will be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate. In agreement with the Principal and Governors, Manchester Academy will close morning registration at **9.45am**. Manchester Academy consider this to be a reasonable amount of time as registers are not able to be kept open for the whole session.

Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation which has been accepted as such by the school. Manchester Academy strives to have unauthorised absences closed off within two weeks. 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.

4. Deletions from the Register

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 the end of compulsory school age;
- The child is in custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team);
- Ten 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.

Manchester Academy will follow Manchester City Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a student's location is unknown.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Manchester Academy believes 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 weekly 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. This is Assistant Principal, Ms Deana Owen.



- 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.

The Senior 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 resources;
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required and on time;
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through weekly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half-termly basis to the lead governor for attendance;
- 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.

The School Attendance Officer will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents;
- Communicate the Attendance Policy to parents and carers;
- Form positive relationships with students and parents;
- Contribute to a whole-school approach which reinforces good school attendance;
- 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;
- Identify half-termly persistent absentees;
- Provide weekly herringbones to AP with Responsibility for Attendance and Year Directors;
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated;
- Keep a record of unauthorised absence sessions for each student so that legal proceedings may be initiated at timely intervals throughout the year;
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions;
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families;
- Meet weekly with AP with Responsibility for Attendance and the Attendance and Safeguarding Assistant to mutually feedback any updates/interventions regarding students with attendance concerns.

Form Tutors and subject teachers will:

- Actively promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality to students and their parents;
- 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;
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated;
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions;
- Complete House Tutor Communication Folders regarding student absence to allow Student Services/School Attendance Officer to update attendance data;
- Ensure registers are taken for each session as a matter of classroom routine in the first ten minutes of each session.

Manchester Academy will also request that Parents:

- 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. Parents should follow this up with a note where possible;
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments with 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.

6. Using Attendance Data

Students’ 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.

Every four weeks the Attendance and Safeguarding Assistant will provide all Form Tutors with attendance data for the previous four weeks for each student within their form group. The list will be presented in numerical descending order with the highest attendees at the top; every student will be colour coded as indicated below:

Attendance Traffic Light

Green Students with attendance between 100% and 96%

Amber Students with attendance between 95.9% and 91%

Red Students with attendance below 90.9%

An arrow next to the student’s name will indicate if their attendance has improved, stayed the same or deteriorated. The student’s attendance percentage for the year to date will also be provided.

The Assistant Principal with responsibility for Attendance and the School Attendance Officer will also receive a complete set of data.

Year Directors will receive a complete set of data for their Year Groups.

This student level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (**Appendix 1**).

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole-school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

Manchester Academy will share attendance data with the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the local authority as required.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the *Data Protection Act 1998*.

7. Support Systems

Manchester 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. All information provided is kept strictly private and confidential.

Manchester Academy also recognises 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.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and students
- Attendance Panels
- Attendance Report Cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Early Help Assessments (EHAs)
- Home Visits
- Attendance Trawls
- Reward systems
- Form Tutor Meetings
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and students.

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Manchester Academy will consider the use of legal sanctions.

8. Legal Sanctions

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 school will provide the Local Authority with the 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 recognise their own

responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly, about returning children to education.

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, they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2,500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

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 five sessions (2.5 days) of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the *Education Act 1996*.

Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

Appendix 1

Escalation of Attendance Interventions

GREEN: students with attendance between 100% and 96%

Students in this group should be congratulated and receive positive encouragement to maintain high levels of attendance. Actions at this point are the responsibility of the Form Tutor with admin support from the Safeguarding and Attendance Administrator.

- Form Tutor – verbal praise and encouragement;
- Students will be rewarded within the school’s merit system;
- Students with this level of half-termly and annual attendance will receive a certificate of attendance and their names will be displayed on the school plasma screens;
- The Attendance and Safeguarding Assistant will monitor the effectiveness of interventions. This will be used to review and inform whole-school strategies and can also have links to Performance Management.

AMBER: students with attendance between 95.9% and 91%

Attendance is starting to cause concern. Early intervention is needed as a preventative measure.

The Form Tutor and Student Services have a key role to play in ensuring communication with parents.

Year Directors provide advice and support to ensure that student’s needs are being met.

The School Attendance Officer will consider the need for a Parental Contract or Penalty Notice warning letter.

The School Attendance Officer will speak to the student to:

- Welcome the student back to school
- Confirm with the student the reason for absence and offer any support that may be required
- Set an individual attendance target for the student using sessions rather than percentages, that will see the student move to the band above
- Agree a review date

The School Attendance Officer will:

- Arrange support to catch up with work missed
- Consider peer support
- If appropriate refer the student to the Children’s Trust Practitioner, School Nurse or Safer School Partnership

Assistant Principal with Responsibility for Attendance will:

- Consider the use of a Parental Contract

- Consider requesting a Penalty Notice if unauthorised absence has occurred within the 15 day window period

The Assistant Principal with responsibility for Attendance will monitor the effectiveness of interventions. This will be used to review and inform whole-school strategies and will also have links to Performance Management.

RED: students with attendance below 90.9%

There are serious concerns over attendance at this level and the student will now be considered to be a **persistent absentee**.

The Assistant Principal with responsibility for Attendance and the School Attendance Officer take the lead in dealing with parents/ carers to ensure an improvement in attendance.

The School Attendance Officer will arrange a parental meeting to:

- Identify any underlying home/school issues that may be causing the student's absence
- Review the student's academic progress and make links to the student's attendance, e.g. "If your child attended all his/her classes he/she could achieve..."
- Make arrangements for the student to catch up on work they have missed
- Implement an Attendance Support Plan or review another existing student plan to include support to improve attendance
- Set an individual attendance target for the student using sessions rather than percentages, that will see the student move to the band above
- Agree a review date

If improvement has not occurred following this intervention, parents will be invited to a second meeting where the possible outcomes will be:

- All parties confident that issues have been resolved and attendance will improve
- Parenting Contract agreed
- Penalty Notice 15 school day monitoring period commences
- Agree a review date

Where these interventions have already been implemented and have had an unsatisfactory impact, the parent will be invited to an Attendance Panel where the possible outcomes will be:

- Complete a CAF leading to multi-agency support if other issues are impacting upon attendance;
- Ensure 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
- Refer to the Local Authority to initiate legal proceedings (prosecution)

The Assistant Principal with responsibility for Attendance will monitor the effectiveness of interventions. This will be used to review and inform whole-school strategies and will also have links to performance management.

The Manchester Academy Unknown Absence Procedure

Student is marked absent from form: N code is used



**School Attendance Officer is alerted to absence.
Student Services telephone all numbers provided by parents/carers.**



Parent/Carer does not answer: Student Services will speak to other school staff to see if reasons for absence have been given, for example

Parent/Carer answers and provides a reason for absence that is deemed appropriate. The appropriate attendance registration mark will be entered.

Parent/Carer answers and provides a reason for absence that is deemed inadequate. Parent/Carer is verbally informed that the reason for absence is not justified and



If no reasons have been given: the Attendance and Safeguarding Assistant will send letter to parents/carers (N Letter).

Where there are 5 sessions (2.5 days) of unauthorised absence, a PNW letter will be sent to parents/carers.



If no reasons have been given and there is no contact with parent/carer, the School Attendance Officer will carry out a home visit. If there is no answer, a calling card will be left asking for the parent/carer to make contact.



If no contact, follow safeguarding/CME procedures/send warning letter/invite parent/carer into academy for attendance concerns meeting. Record all actions on student file/SIMS.

Where there is no improvement in the 15-day window the Manchester City Council Penalty Notice protocol will be followed.



Where there has been improvement in attendance the PNW will be discharged for this period. However the attendance of the student will be closely monitored by the School Attendance Officer and Year Director.

For Office Use Only

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