



Marple Hall School

Policy Document

Attendance and Punctuality

Date to be reviewed: Spring 2021

Date approved by Governors:

Signed by Chair of Committee:

Signed by Headteacher:

Date for next review: Spring 2023

Date to be presented to Governors for approval: Spring 2021

SCHOOL STATEMENT

A school year is very short and has only 190 days for students. This leaves 175 days for holidays and activities at home. A school week is also very short. Most students spend 7 to 7½ hours at school at most on each of the five days they attend during term time. This means only approximately one third of a school day is spent in school. Most of the day and the week is spent at home. Time in school is precious. Absence from school and late arrival to school has a negative effect on a pupil's educational progress, achievement and employment prospects.

Marple Hall School attaches great importance to good attendance and punctuality and seeks to promote these through the vigilance of all staff; Services for Young People, and the support and co-operation of parents and pupils.

After illness, the taking of holidays in term time has been the single largest cause of absence from schools in England. At Marple Hall School we believe that holidays in term time are undesirable because of the impact on our pupils' education, and we encourage parents always to take family holidays in the school holidays.

Research has shown that there is clear link between levels of attendance and levels of achievement and that, in short, the more time a pupil misses school, the lower their levels of achievement are likely to be.

Taking holidays in term time has a disruptive effect upon pupils' learning and it is often difficult for pupils to catch up with work that has been missed. It may also suggest to some pupils that their education is not an important priority.

Following guidelines laid out in recent amendments to the Government's Education Regulations, Headteachers are no longer empowered to authorise holidays in term-time. In exceptional circumstances Head teachers are permitted to authorise a leave of absence, the length of which will depend on those circumstances. A child's education is of great importance and any term-time absence may unduly affect their progress. As a result it will be rare for holidays to be approved.

If parents or carers wish to request permission for leave of absence, a Leave of Absence request form must be completed and returned at least four weeks before the start date of the proposed absence detailing the exceptional circumstances of the request.

Leave of absence taken without permission may lead to fixed penalty fines of up to £60 per parent for each pupil, rising to £120 if this is unpaid, being issued by the Local Authority.

AIMS OF THE ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

- To improve and maintain levels of attendance and punctuality at Marple Hall School.
- To deal promptly with the causes of non-attendance and lateness and introduce effective working procedures which can have substantial influence on school rates of attendance and punctuality. Teachers, students, parents, ancillary staff and governors all have an important part to play.

- This policy aims to state in clear language the procedures necessary to improving and maintaining attendance and punctuality.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Parents, the School and Local Authority all have a legal responsibility to ensure the students attend school regularly and on time.
- Both the School and Services for Young People will adhere to their partnership agreement and are committed to achieving agreed targets.
- Senior Leaders of the school, governors and all staff will work in partnership with parents and students to improve and maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- The School will adopt a role of praising students for excellent or greatly improved attendance and punctuality.
- Where necessary the School and Services for Young People will work together to warn about and enforce Education Penalty Notices when attendance is poor and not improving.
- Accurate record keeping is essential with the electronic registration system.
- All staff are made aware of targets related to Persistent Absence figures and strive diligently to keep out of that category.

PROCEDURES

- Parents will inform the school in writing, by phone, text, app or details written in the student planner when an absence is known in advance
- Medical appointments where possible, should be made outside school hours. If this is not possible then parents or carers should try to reduce the impact to a half day absence.
- Parents of students absent through illness will contact the school on the first day of absence, by telephone, to a designated phone number, stating their child's name, form and reason for absence, with regular updates if a long absence.
- The Attendance Officer will retrieve absentee messages, amend the mark on the electronic register and enter the reason for absence in the 'Comment Box' relating to that student. This comment can be viewed by any member of staff wishing to find out why a pupil is absent.
- Form tutors and subject teachers will record attendance/absence and lateness accurately within the first 10 minutes of each lesson being made fully aware by Senior Leaders that inaccuracy can lead to mistakes with contacting parents (first-day calling.)
- If a parent fails to contact school about absence, the Attendance Officer will generate a text message to the parent's mobile phone informing them that their child has not attended school and requesting they text back with a reason or to contact the school. If there is no response from the text a follow up telephone call is made (first day calling). When a reason has been ascertained, details are entered in the comment box on the students register and the mark amended accordingly.
- The Attendance Officer will follow up an unexplained absence with a letter home to the parent requesting a reason for absence and for them to contact school or to reply to the letter as soon as possible.
- All late students are issued with a strike unless a valid reason is given or they have a note in their planner explaining the reason for lateness. Students that are persistently late will be supported with a personalised sanction programme to help individuals improve their punctuality.

- When a student arrives in school late after 9am they should sign in at the Attendance Office Once registered, they should then go straight to lessons (or registration on accelerated day.) Their attendance is recorded as LATE (L).
- A student leaving the premises during the school day for a medical appointment or when sick and collected by an adult, must sign out at Bradshaw Attendance Office. A note should be shown at the Attendance Office as proof of an appointment. A numbered Pass is then issued to the student. The Pass is to be handed in to the Receptionist on the main Reception who will open the automatic front gate.
- The attendance officer and Community Attendance Liaison Officer will monitor attendance weekly and send letters home when needed.
- Home visits may be undertaken by the Community Attendance Liaison Officer to those students whose attendance becomes a cause for concern.
- Students who demonstrate long term absence or have frequent short-term absences may be invited with their parents to an attendance meeting with their Head of Year, CALO and / or Pastoral Manager.
- Where the school has concerns about a student's level of absence, attendance letters will be sent home to highlight the concern and offer appropriate support. This support may include a meeting where barriers to a students continued good attendance are discussed and a contract of support is drawn up between parents, school and the student.
- If a student has regular absence due to illness, the school can offer support via our Medical Needs Officer. A meeting can be arranged with the student and responsible adult to create a medical support plan for the student.
- If students have 5 days of unauthorised absence or more over a 3 month period the school may refer for an Educational Penalty Notice which can lead to a fine of £60 per parent.
- If a student is late on 10 occasions, the school may send a warning letter informing parents of the potential for an Educational Penalty Notice. If a student's punctuality does not improve after receiving this letter the school may refer for an Educational Penalty Notice which could result in a fine of £60 per parent.
- Morning registration session closes at 10.50am. Students arriving after this time will be recorded as U. This is in line with the DFE guidance on School Attendance 2016 that ***“Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are kept open for the whole session.”*** and also ***“Every school day must have two sessions divided by a break. The length of each session, break and the school day is determined by the school's governing body.”*** *Our morning session is lengthy and does not finish till 12.10pm for Key Stage 3 and 1.10pm for Key Stage 4. Due to a shortened Monday, Key Stage 3 lunch starts at 11.40am and Key stage 4 lunch commences at 12.30pm*
- With continuing attendance issues of a serious nature that are not being resolved, the school will refer to the Team around the School (TAS) meeting.
- On re-integration into School following long term absence/truancy, a re-integration programme will be drawn up and signed by all concerned parties. This will be designed to support the students over time and be evaluated and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Long term and chronically sick students will be helped following the Local Authority's policy for educating sick children.
- Where health issues, substance misuse or bereavement are issues of concern affecting attendance, the School will enable the student access to

outside agencies such as Beacon Counselling, 'MOSAIC' drug awareness programme or any other services.

- Marple Hall School will constantly emphasise to students and their parents the strong link between punctuality, good attendance, academic success and the healthy social development of students.
- Excellent and greatly improved attendees will be rewarded. This will be done through Friday 5, form competitions, achievement badges, certificates and vouchers. High and improving attendees will both be recognised.
- The Attendance Team will update the Senior Leadership Team with a regular report, usually half-termly. The report will highlight headline figures, individual student cases and strategies being utilised in order to raise performance.
- Through Tutor Period; equal opportunities, special educational needs and bullying will be highlighted as aspects to be closely monitored in school and students will be encouraged to report inequalities that may affect attendance so problems can be rectified.

Education off-site

Students attending education off-site will have their attendance/absence mark forwarded to our Attendance Officer who will amend the appropriate student attendance mark on the electronic registration system. If an absent mark has been recorded by the college or placement we will contact parents to obtain a reason for the absence.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The policy will be in effect until the Spring of 2023.

C Gregory
January 2021