

GMLT

Attendance and Truancy Policy

For

GMLT Schools

(effective from 24th January 2017)

Attendance & Truancy

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school and is related to the following legislation:

We believe this policy relates to the following legislation:

- Students Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2005
- Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Advice on School Attendance (DfE)
- Improving Attendance at School (DfE)

We believe that students cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our students take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of students.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students. We believe high attainment depends on good attendance.

We expect all school personnel to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all students are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school. School personnel have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

Sometimes a student's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances it is our policy to be supportive of the student and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. Also, on occasion we have to give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and its links to student attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their students attend school regularly.

Greater Manchester Learning Trust

We believe truancy is a matter that we treat very seriously as we feel students are not only losing valuable learning time but they are putting themselves at serious risk as the school and their parents are not aware of their whereabouts.

We believe it is essential to have a strong working relationship with One Education which provides support for students and their families in order promote good student attendance and to reduce truancy.

We are aware that leave of absence can only be granted to a student in exceptional circumstances. When considering whether the reasons behind a request for absence during term time are 'exceptional' we will consider the context/reason for the trip and make a request to see all related evidence from the parent/carer in relation to the visit including travel documents, forwarding addresses and an expected return date.

We will exercise a consistent approach and ensure equity for all students.

We aim to be judged at least good in all school inspections by ensuring that standards for all students are higher than schools of a similar size and that standards continue to improve faster than the national trend. Student attendance, and the impact it has on learning and progress, significantly contributes to achieving a positive judgement and so there is an agreement that parents/carers looking to place their children at a GMLT school will not make requests for absence during term-time unless the reason would be regarded as 'exceptional'.

We wish to work closely with the student leadership teams and to hear their views and opinions as we acknowledge and support Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Student that students should be encouraged to form and to express their views.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

Aims

- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- To have in place procedures to prevent truancy.
- To work with other schools to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- delegate powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy;
- promote the importance of attendance and punctuality with all stakeholders;
- ensure compliance with all statutory student registration regulations;
- ensure that the attendance lead and associated administrators identify and follow up all absence and lateness;
- ensure that the attendance policy is carried out;
- set attendance targets for the year that are realistic and challenging in order to raise school attendance;
- ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders;
- monitor termly progress towards these targets by considering the following questions:
 - Has attendance improved?
 - Has punctuality improved?
 - Has parental response to absences improved?
- ensure the Headteacher exercises their discretionary power to authorise absence in extenuating circumstances;
- ensure the Headteacher does not authorise absence if it is to the detriment of a student's education;
- responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;
- responsibility to ensure that appropriate action will be taken to deal with all prejudice related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;
- responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents;
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- ensure all school personnel, students and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- create a culture which encourages attendance;
- address all school based causes of poor attendance such as bullying, racism etc;
- undertake the monitoring of school attendance via the attendance lead and associated administrators by using an appropriate and effective registration system;
- ensure registration is taken at the start of the morning session and at the beginning of the afternoon session;

Greater Manchester Learning Trust

- ensure school personnel are fully trained in the registration process and with the appropriate categorisation of absence;
- ensure students are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day;
- monitor attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, first language, eligibility for Free School Meals, Pupil Premium, special educational needs and persistent absentees;
- monitor trends by using data effectively to help strategic planning;
- ensure early intervention in order to prevent absenteeism or truancy and to put in to affect a range of procedures to deal with this problem;
- send to parents their child's attendance percentage within the academic progress review;
- target intervention and support to those students that have been highlighted as poor attenders;
- agenda attendance and truancy at periodic meetings with school personnel;
- work closely with the One Education and the Local Authority to monitor attendance and set appropriate interventions to support good attendance;
- have in place a system for parents to report a student's absence;
- expect an explanation for every absence and if one is not forthcoming then the absence will be categorised as unauthorised;
- challenge any parental explanation for student absence if there is doubt as to the validity of the explanation and request medical evidence;
- report to the Governing Body, through the Headteacher's Report to Governors, attendance figures and progress to achieving set targets;
- remind parents of their commitment to this policy;
- meet with parents if they have applied for leave of absence during school time;
- ensure school personnel are aware that unauthorised absence is absence without approval from the Headteacher and includes all unexplained absences;
- when considering an application for leave of absence request will consider the:
 - length and purpose for the leave of absence
 - impact on continuity of learning
 - circumstances of the family
 - time of year of the proposed trip
- apply a consistent approach across the school and ensure equity for all students;
- promote good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body;
- award good attendance badges to students when they have achieved 100% attendance;
- introduce rewards and incentives to encourage punctuality;
- organise home tuition with the local support services for students with long term illness provided they are well enough to undertake the work;
- adopt procedures for reintegrating long-term absentees;
- organise training for school personnel on the use and understanding of attendance codes and authorised and unauthorised attendance;
- improve teaching in order to improve student engagement;
- work closely with the link governor and attendance lead;
- strengthen links with external agencies who engage with and support families;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;

Greater Manchester Learning Trust

- provide guidance, support and training to all staff especially on bullying and the needs of vulnerable groups;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by:
 - monitoring trends and patterns as highlighted in attendance data
 - achieving results above the national average
 - looking at results from parent, student and school personnel questionnaires
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.

Role of the Attendance Team

The Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- implementing the policy with the Headteacher;
- contacting parents if they have not reported their student's absence by 9.00a.m;
- home visits
- sending a letter if no contact is made;
- continuing to contact the parents throughout the day until contact is made;
- contacting the key worker if a student is on the student protection register and no reason has been given for the student's absence;
- monitoring individual and class attendance on a daily basis;
- keeping the Headteacher informed of attendance figures and trends;
- contacting parents regarding concerns about their student's attendance;
- organising meetings between SLT, Heads of Learning and parents to discuss their student's poor attendance;
- organising meetings between the SLT, Heads of Learning and parents to discuss their student's truancy;
- organising meetings between the SLT, Heads of Learning and parents to discuss their application for a term time leave;
- compiling attendance data reports for the Headteacher to report to the Governing Body
- ensuring registers are kept up to date.

Role of One Education

One Education Service will:

- establish effective working relationships with schools, students and parents to ensure educational entitlement and regular attendance;
- ensure students attend school regularly;
- investigate reasons for a student's poor attendance;
- provide support and counselling for students and their families;
- work with local agencies providing education, health and social services for students with specific needs;
- work with disaffected students;
- work with students who may be excluded;
- find alternative educational provision for excluded students;
- support schools at Early Help Assessment meeting;
- undertake truancy watch patrols with the local police.

Role of School Personnel

School personnel will:

- comply with and implement this policy;
- be aware of all other linked policies;
- set an example of punctuality and good attendance;
- ensure registration is taken at the start of the morning session and at the beginning of the afternoon session;
- ensure students are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day;
- ensure that lesson registers are up to date;
- be responsible for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality by monitoring class and individual attendance patterns;
- inform the school office of any concerns about attendance or suspected truancy;
- promote and emphasise the importance of punctuality and good attendance with students and parents;
- discuss individual student attendance at parent-teacher consultations.

Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will:

- comply with this policy;
- work as partners with the school in the education of their students;
- ensure their students of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education;
- ensure their students are punctual and know the importance of good attendance;
- inform the school on the first day of absence;
- inform the school of any changes to their contact details;
- collect their students on time
- take part in periodic surveys conducted by the school;
- avoid taking leave of absence in term time;
- be aware that the Headteacher when considering an application for leave of absence request will consider the:
 - length and purpose for the leave of absence
 - impact on continuity of learning
 - circumstances of the family
 - time of year of the proposed trip
 - flight information and forwarding address

(Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- where parents fail to seek permission for time off then the absence will be treated as unauthorised and could be subject to statutory action from the Local Authority
- A student is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- A student has accrued unauthorised absence without reasons provided and/or accepted as exceptional by the Headteacher

Greater Manchester Learning Trust

- A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £120 fine is paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 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.
- be aware that the Headteacher will only consider leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances

- be encouraged to take an active interest in their student's work and to take an active role in the life of the school by attending:
 - parents and open evenings
 - parent-teacher consultations
 - school concerts
 - fundraising and social events

- encourage effort and achievement;
- encourage completion of homework and return it to school;
- provide the right conditions for homework to take place;
- expect their student to hand in homework on time;
- join the school in celebrating success of their student's learning;
- supporting the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school.

Role of the Local Authority

The Local Authority may prosecute a parent for not ensuring their student attends school regularly or may issue or apply for:

- Penalty Notice
- Education Supervision Order
- Parenting Order
- School Attendance Order

The Local Authority should:

- provide training on the understanding and analysing attendance data and clear guidance on the correct use of attendance codes;
- analyse attendance patterns in order to improve student attendance especially those from vulnerable groups;
- make schools more aware of national priorities, initiatives and available grants in order to improve student attendance;
- try to identify why there is a variation in the use of attendance codes between schools;
- share good practice within the Local Authority and should identify and explore good practice in other Local Authorities.

Greater Manchester Learning Trust

Role of the Students

Students are responsible for:

- being aware of the school attendance and truancy policy;
- arriving at school on time;
- attending all lessons;
- knowing the value of good attendance;
- knowing the seriousness of truancy, attending classes during the school day and not playing truant;
- not leave the school site without permission
- accepting sanctions if they are caught playing truant;
- returning to school after a period of illness;
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school;
- liaise with the school council;
- take part in questionnaires and surveys.

Dealing with trends in attendance

When there is a pattern of poor attendance then the following procedure will take place:

- Parents/Carers are invited to attend an informal meeting with the Head of Learning and Attendance Team to explain their student's repeated absence.
- Support will be given if there are underlying reasons for the absence.
- If not, then the situation will be monitored for improvement.
- If there is no improvement then the Attendance Officer/Supervisor will take the appropriate action.

Dealing with lateness

The Attendance Lead and Office Administrators will monitor lateness and inform:

- the Heads of Learning and tutors of patterns of lateness;
- parents of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed

Dealing with truancy

If a student is thought to be truanting then the school will inform:

- the parent/carer;
- a record of the truancy will be logged on the school register;
- a sanction will be issued;

All truants will receive:

- sanctions;
- support;
- discussions with a school leader so that they understand the seriousness of the matter;

Greater Manchester Learning Trust

- a programme of monitoring and support

Parents will be informed immediately if a student leaves school without prior permission.

Absence

Excluded (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The student's class teacher / tutor / Head of Year will make arrangements for work to be delivered home.

Leave of absence during term time – parents/carers are discouraged to take leave of absence during term time. Leave of absence is only allowed in exceptional circumstances. Parents are asked to put in writing any request for permission to take their child out of school during term time. In those cases where a family is leaving the country, school will request copies of the travel confirmation and the address in which the family will reside during the period of absence.

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 2013. This means that the student will lose their school place.

Religious Observance – a maximum of one day absence is allowed for religious observance. Parrs Wood High 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 by written request by the parent/carer of authorised absence

Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments – we encourage these appointments to take place out of school time in order not to disrupt the student's education. Parents/Carers will be challenged where excessive time is taken

Raising Awareness of the Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the School Handbook/Prospectus
- the school website
- the Staff Handbook
- meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
- school events
- meetings with school personnel
- communications with home such as newsletters
- reports such annual report to parents and Headteacher reports to the Governing Body

Training

All school personnel:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion

Greater Manchester Learning Trust

- receive training on this policy on induction which specifically covers:
 - the importance of good attendance and punctuality
 - all aspects of this policy
 - the use and understanding of attendance codes
 - authorised and unauthorised attendance
 - looking at trends and patterns
 - bullying
 - the needs of vulnerable groups
- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any student and it helps to promote equality at this school.

Monitoring the Effectiveness of this Policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually, or when the need arises, by the Headteacher and the Governing Body.

Linked Policies

▪ Behaviour	▪ Home School Agreement
▪ Inclusion	▪ Anti-bullying
▪ Troubled and Vulnerable Students	▪ Outside Agencies
▪ Admission and Attendance Registers	▪