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01/02/16	AB	Formatted
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01/02/18		

School Attendance Policy

Rationale

School attendance is central to raising standards in education and ensuring all students can fulfil their potential. Manchester Settlement School is an independent school providing full time education for pupils referred from other maintained schools or academies. Our pupils have a variety of needs which often manifest in poor attendance at school. Our ethos and curriculum will be to provide an engaging and supportive individual offer that will encourage a high level of attendance.

The Government expects:

Schools and local authorities to:

Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence

Ensure every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

Act early to address patterns of absence

Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly. 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.

All students to be punctual to lessons

This Policy sets out how Manchester Settlement School will fulfil its duties and in so doing takes account of the Education Act 1996; the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and the subsequent amendments in 2010, 2011 and 2013.

The School will.....

- Ensure that all students and parents understand the issues and procedures for attendance.
- Ensure that all Trustees, administrative, support and non-teaching staff understand the issues and procedures for attendance.
- Aim to allocate resources (e.g. time, space, funding) to support this policy.

Work in a systematic and timely way to identify, report and address poor attendance.

Work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Work in partnership with referring schools to address poor attendance and follow referring schools attendance policy and procedures.

Ensure that legal and statutory requirements are met

Admissions

Admission Register

- Manchester Settlement School has an admission register, which contains the personal details of every student in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the last school attended.
- Students are entered on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend the school. For most students this is normally the first day of the school year

A student's absence will have a serious impact on his/her attainment. He/she needs to know that every absence is noticed and appropriate action is always taken

Children at Risk of Missing Education

Manchester Settlement School will inform the home school of any student who will need to be reported to the Local Authority as part of the Home School's statutory duty.

Where the pupil is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education

- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical advisor that the student is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school
- Are in custody for a period of more than 4 months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe that they will be returning to the school at the end of that period
- Have been permanently excluded - The Local Authority will be notified in advance of the deletion when the school becomes aware that the deletion will be made.

Home Educated Children

When the school receives written notification of the intent to home educate, Manchester Settlement School will inform the Home School at the student. The school will not seek to persuade any parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the child or because the student has a poor attendance record. It will not seek to prevent parents from educating their children outside the school system. There is no requirement for parents to obtain the school's permission or the agreement of the Local Authority to educate their child at home.

However, parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education, but this does not have to be at school.

Attendance Register

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day. This shows whether the student is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. The school will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once at the start of the second session. On each occasion the school will record whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

If a student of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or another unavoidable cause.

Morning registration is 9-00 a.m. – 9-15 a.m. Children arriving after this time will have an 'L' recorded on the register. This counts as a present. Continued lateness will result in referral to the Education Attendance Service. Students arriving after 9.30am will have a 'U' recorded on the register. This counts as an unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

Every member of staff will regularly check the attendance of their class and will follow up a student's absence with appropriate personnel in school.

This attendance policy includes procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of students. We will report to Home schools to enable them to comply with the Education Act (Student Registration) Regulations 2006 where schools have a duty to refer to the Local Authority any child of compulsory school age who is continuously absent from school for two weeks without explanation or whose attendance is irregular or whose punctuality is an issue.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

All young people have a right to a quality education. Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends regularly and punctually. If a student does not, parents/carers may face legal action.

Leave of Absence from School

In line with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, the school cannot authorise leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents are informed of the school's attendance policy in the Induction booklet. Requests for leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances should be put in writing to the Headteacher, at least 6 weeks before the period of absence requested.

Manchester Settlement's criteria for exceptional circumstances are as follows:

- Holidays for children of members of the armed forces.

- An emergency visit to a dying relative (proof will be needed that the visit was booked as an emergency).
- Filming or acting commitments – a maximum of 10 days/year, but not when in proximity of public examinations and only if staff certify that the student is up to date with work and is on target.
- Where the child is a carer.

The Head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Where leave of absence is granted the Head teacher will determine the number of days a student can be away from school and any leave of absence is granted entirely at the discretion of the Head teacher. School will inform parents/carers in writing of the decision made and the reasons for it.

Procedures for reporting absence

General absences

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

1. The school telephone line is used for parents to report reasons for absence -0161 974 1300
2. If your child is absent for 1 day: telephone the school number, clearly stating your child's name, form, date of absence and reason for absence.
3. If your child is absent for more than 1 day: telephone school again each day to inform school of progress.
5. If you prefer, you can write into school covering your child's absence; this letter should be handed into the reception office.
6. We would ask that, wherever possible, doctor and dental appointments are made outside the school day. If this is not possible, your child's attendance record will be marked 'M'. This represents an authorised absence. The student should sign in at Reception on their arrival in school
7. In order to keep absence due to illness to a minimum, the school asks for medical evidence in the following cases:
 - Where a child has had 5 or more days of absence for illness – these do not have to be consecutive days
 - Where the school is notified of an operation or lengthy medical treatment

Medical evidence can be in the form of the following:

A medical appointment card

A medical appointment letter

A copy of a prescription with the name of the child and the date

Medication with a chemist's label showing the name and the date

An "unfit for School" declaration or letter from your GP

A hospital discharge letter

When your child returns to school after 5 or more days of absence, he/she should bring the medical evidence to the school reception. Medical evidence must be brought within one week of the period of absence or the absence will not be authorised.

Absences of 5 or more days without medical evidence will not be authorised and as such may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

Promoting good attendance

The school believes that good attendance is vital for all our students if they are to gain the most from the education it provides. The greater the attendance, the greater the achievement!

Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

The school will promote good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials and good attendance by students will be recognised and rewarded appropriately.

All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

The school hopes that parents will assist us in our work of raising attendance levels throughout the school by:

Ensuring the regular attendance of their child.

Informing the school when their child is absent from school and the reason for the absence.

Attending any meetings about their child's attendance, which may be necessary.

The importance of good attendance is highlighted in assemblies and a reward system is in place. The absence lists are reviewed on a daily and weekly basis, to ensure that patterns of absence are quickly responded to. Individual action plans will be initiated as a result.

Parents are able to view their child's attendance record on the school reports and can meet staff at Parents Evenings. Regular contact with school is encouraged.

Parents are encouraged to inform the school of any issues which may be affecting their child's ability to cope in school i.e. family bereavement, changes in family circumstances, possible bullying issues.

Students are encouraged to discuss their fears and anxieties about school with Form Teachers, friends, Learning Mentors. In this way, problems can be responded to before they also become an attendance issue.

School Staff undertake home visits when necessary and hold discussions with external agencies i.e. School Health, Social Care.

Students whose attendance falls below 80% are discussed with the Home School and appropriate actions are taken. i.e. series of letters, home visits. Failure to improve attendance can result in Health Panels, Police Panels, Parents Contracts, Fast Track Attendance monitoring and Fixed Penalty Notices.

The MIS system provides a morning and afternoon attendance mark for every student. This quickly highlights students' absence at the beginning of each session and the Pastoral Team is alerted, so that the student can be located and parents informed if necessary.

Legal Measures

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at the school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the Local Authority.

Penalty notices are fines imposed on parents and can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents, to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Attendance management procedures.

First day contact procedures for attendance officer - This procedure is to be followed for each day of absence.

Pupil is absent from School

At close of register - 9.15 am attendance officer to call/text parent/carers to establish reason for absence.

All contact information to be logged on school pod attendance contact log

The Head teacher will confirm register codes with the attendance officer.

Attendance officer to inform Learning Mentors of absence

The school attendance officer will email attendance registers and comments where necessary to home schools daily once completed.

Contact is made with parent/carer

Authorised absence

Reason given for absence is deemed acceptable - 'Authorised Absence': Evidence to be requested e.g. medical appointment card, ask that student brings in prescribed medication as proof of illness upon return etc.

Appropriate coding to be entered on the daily register.

Unauthorised absence

Reason given for absence is deemed unacceptable - 'Unauthorised Absence': Parent/carer to be informed that the reason for absence is unauthorised.

Appropriate coding to be entered on the register.

No Contact is made with parent/carer following absence

If no contact is made with the parent /carer on the first day of absence and the student is known to be vulnerable, (school pastoral staff will make you aware if this is the case) the attendance officer will inform the school Pastoral worker and MS safeguarding lead verbally and confirm with an email.

For all pupils, attempts to contact the parent should be made throughout the day.

If no contact is made with parent/carer to establish reason for absence following a second consecutive day of absence send out 'Unable to make contact letter' (REF:02) to each parent/carer with Parental Responsibility. - Copy to be kept on student's file.

Email the school pastoral worker and Safeguarding lead for every day of non contact..

Interventions and monitoring - Pastoral team, Head teacher, Safeguarding lead

Unauthorised absences

After the first day (and subsequent days) of unauthorised absence for vulnerable pupils the Learning Mentor will inform the home schools safeguarding contact and any known social worker involved with the pupils family.

For all pupils attendance registers will be reviewed daily and weekly by the pastoral team so that levels of absence can be monitored. Learning Mentors to contact parents in the afternoon if no contact has been made during the day and log on school pod.

After 2 days of unauthorised absences (and subsequent days) for all pupils the Learning mentor will agree interventions with Lead mentor. (this may mean contact with parents by the learning mentors, to discuss the importance of attendance, help to identify support needs of the family in getting the pupil to attend, one to ones with pupils to discuss any issues, attendance monitoring, attendance plan, parents meeting in school attendance agreement, adjustment to school day for pupil

Interventions are to be recorded on the pupils file.

After 5 days of unauthorised absence the pastoral team will notify the home school that a home visit by the welfare team is required. The home school is to be informed of all interventions and strategies used to date to improve pupils attendance.

Interventions will be repeated throughout absences

The Head and attendance team should continue to monitor absence and implement next stage interventions to improve attendance.

Authorised absences

Authorised absence is approved by the head teacher or their deputy –authorised absences should be reviewed by the HT weekly.

Authorised absence should be monitored as part of daily and weekly attendance monitoring. If a pupil has 5 or more non consecutive authorised absences in a term learning mentors should inform the Lead Mentor and head teacher and attendance monitoring and interventions implemented where required.

Authorised absence may be due to an illness or accident which requires the pupil to be absent for several consecutive days of absence. In this case learning mentors are to monitor the absence and keep in contact with the family. Medical evidence must be received and where necessary adjustments made to enable the pupil to attend school.