



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY: PUPILS**

### **Introduction and aims**

Manchester High School for Girls expects its pupils to aim for full attendance and excellent punctuality and is committed to a policy of working with pupils and parents to this end. High standards in these aspects are considered essential in fulfilling the aims of the School, in particular in instilling in the pupils a sense of personal responsibility and reliability and in encouraging the fulfilment of individual academic potential. Manchester High School for Girls is committed to ensuring that all pupils, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an age-appropriate, efficient, full-time education.

The School complies with the provisions of the Education Act 1996, the Pupil Registration Regulations 2006, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016. It also complies with the advice provided by the DfE in the following documents:

- Children Missing Education (August 2024)
- Summary table of responsibilities or school attendance (August 2024)
- Working together to improve school attendance (August 2024)

The School is registered with the Information Commissioner under the Data Protection Act 1998.

This policy relates to all pupils of compulsory school age. From September 2015, all young people have been required to continue in education or training until they reach their eighteenth birthday.

A parent is defined as “every natural parent, whether or not they are married; any person who has parental responsibility and who has cared for a child even though they may not be the natural parent”.

### **Objectives**

- To monitor pupil attendance and punctuality in registration periods and lessons
- To liaise closely with parents in the case of unacceptable levels of absence or persistent late arrival and to apply sanctions if appropriate
- To reward full attendance
- To act early to address patterns of absence
- To comply with the Equality Policy by authorising absence for the main religious festivals
- To support pupils with genuine illness by helping them to catch up on missed work

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Maintaining good school attendance is everyone’s responsibility. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

It is the responsibility of all teaching staff to work with parents and pupils to maintain high

levels of pupil attendance. Parents have a legal duty to ensure their compulsory school age child is registered at a school and attends regularly. Failure to do this is an offence under the Education Act 1996.

Schools have safeguarding duties under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to investigate any unexplained absences.

#### **Statistical analysis of attendance data**

- The School will analyse attendance data at least once per term.
- The data will be used to identify trends and patterns for individual pupils and for groups of pupils such as those with learning disabilities or difficulties.
- The Head of Year (the Head of Prep in the Prep Department) will initiate action if pupils have an attendance percentage below 90 per cent.

#### **Attendance problems – individual pupils**

Heads of Year / Heads of Section and/or the SENCo (the Head of Prep in the Prep Department) will use some of the following actions to overcome low or irregular attendance:

- Meet with parents to discuss strategies at school and at home to encourage improved attendance
- Arrange learning mentors (older pupils, usually sixth form)
- Use letters or phone calls to parents to discourage absence
- Provide extra help in catching up on work missed
- Provide, in association with the School Nurse, in-school counselling

#### **Pupils are required to:**

- Attend regularly unless ill or absence has been authorised by the School in advance
- Attend registration punctually at 8.50am and 2.05 pm (as part of their period 5 lesson)
- Sign the late arrivals list if they arrive after the close of registration. (Tutor to update if arrival before 9.15)
- Discuss with the Form Tutor and Subject Teachers any planned absences at least one week in advance
- Catch up on work missed through absence, normally within a week of return to school

#### **Parents will be asked, via information in the Parent Handbook, to:**

- Ensure that their daughter attends school regularly
- Telephone or email school before 9.00 am on the first day of absence to inform of the reason for absence
- Email the school attendance address or send in written confirmation of the reason for absence
- Make non-emergency dental and medical appointments outside school time
- Ensure that their daughter arrives in school no later than 8.45am each day
- Make requests for unavoidable leave of absence in writing to the Head Mistress at least ten school days before the requested absence
- Not take holiday absence during term-time as such absence will be unauthorised

#### **Subject teachers will:**

- Register pupil attendance for the afternoon session promptly and accurately at 2.05 pm, recording whether the pupil is present, late or absent
- Record pupil attendance, absence and punctuality to all lessons electronically via SIMS
- Apply sanctions for late arrival, for example making up the time missed during break or lunchtime

- Apply sanctions for failure to catch up on work missed through absence after an appropriate time limit. Appropriate sanctions might include repositioning the pupil to work alone until work is completed or giving subject detention
- Record pupil absence for individual Music or Speech and Drama tuition as a comment on SIMS if a pupil has sought permission in advance
- Alert the Pastoral Office and Attendance Officer immediately if a pupil is absent from the lesson, but has been present in school
- Alert the Form Tutor and Head of Year, via the behaviour management system on SIMS, if absence or poor punctuality are persistent problems

**Heads of Department will:**

- Ensure that subject teachers are recording lesson attendance and punctuality by spot checks on SIMS records
- Standardise departmental sanctions for pupils who are late to lessons or fail to copy up work missed through absence

**The Form Tutor will:**

- Register pupil attendance accurately and promptly at 8.50am, recording whether the pupil is present, late or absent
- Follow up cases of unaccounted for absence or unacceptable notes
- Keep the Head of Year informed of any repeated lates or absence, and signs of suspected truancy
- Inform the Head of Year of any possible underlying problems that might account for absences
- Inform the Head of Year if the pupil has frequent absence, if a single absence was more than ten days or if the absence was for family bereavement, a serious illness or an accident
- Send any absence letters or emails received to the Attendance Officer as soon as possible
- Follow up on notes received via the behaviour management systems on SIMS from Subject Teachers regarding absence or poor punctuality
- Apply sanctions if a pupil is late to morning registration

**In the Preparatory Department the Class teacher will:**

- Register pupil attendance accurately twice per day promptly, recording whether the pupil is present, late or absent
- Ensure that pupils bring letters from parents explaining absence
- Follow up cases of unaccounted for absence or unacceptable notes
- Alert the Head of Preparatory Department if no reason for absence has been received, so that a standard letter will be sent to parents
- Inform the Head of Preparatory Department of any possible underlying problems that might account for absences
- Inform the Head of Preparatory Department if the pupil has frequent absence, if a single absence was more than ten days or if the absence was for family bereavement, a serious illness or an accident
- Send absence letters or emails to the Attendance Officer
- Contact parents if a pupil is regularly late for school

**The Attendance Officer (the Prep Receptionist in the Prep Department) will:**

- Produce daily absence lists after 9.30am and e-mail them to all staff
- Collect the late arrivals sign-in sheet from Reception. This includes pupils who miss registration for individual tuition in Music or Speech and Drama
- Ensure that all pupils, for whom absence is not anticipated in the morning and afternoon

- registration sessions, are accounted for
- Make appropriate changes to registers once all pupils are accounted for
- Contact parents on day one of absence so that information is gained in writing. After five days without written confirmation of reason for absence, register marks N will be changed to U, per Department for Education guidelines.
- Email Heads of Year with a list of students with register marks of N from the previous week
- Produce information for Heads of Year when requested so that attendance can be monitored carefully
- Ensure that any amendment made to the attendance register includes the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment and the date on which the amendment was made

**The Registrar will:**

- Maintain an up-to-date computerised Admissions Register, printed out annually at the end of each school year in July
- Store annual printouts of the Admissions Register for at least three years and make these available for inspection on request. One copy to Registrar and one copy to Deputy Head (Pastoral)
- Back up the electronic admissions register at least once a month. The monthly back-up copies are to be stored for at least three years on CDs in the school safe

The School will comply with Pupil Registration Regulations 2006 by:

- Ensuring that the school has an Admissions Register containing an index in alphabetical order of all the pupils at the School.
- Printing out the computerised admissions register annually and storing previous year's records for at least three years.
- Including in the Register from the beginning of the first day on which the School has agreed, or has been notified, that the pupil will attend the School the following information for each pupil:
  - name in full
  - gender
  - name and address and telephone number of every parent known to be a parent of a pupil and an indication of which parent the pupil normally lives with, and which parents hold parental responsibility
  - day, month and year of birth
  - day, month and year of admission or re-admission to the school
  - name and address of any school last attended

The Registrar will notify both the School's local authority (Manchester) and the local authority where the child is normally resident when a pupil's name is removed or added to the admissions register at non-standard transitions i.e. where a compulsory school-aged child leaves a school before completing the school's final year or joins a school after the beginning of the school's first year. Notification will be made within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register and will include all the information held within the admission register about the pupil.

Where the parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil will live at another address, in addition or instead, the Registrar will record in the admission register: (a) the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will normally live in the future, (b) the new address, and (c) the date from when it is expected the pupil will normally live at this address.

Where a parent notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school, the Registrar will record in the admission register: (a) the name of the other school, and (b) the date of when the pupil first attended, or is due to start attending, that school.

A pupil's name will only be removed from the Admissions Register if:

- the parent has notified the School that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at School (Registrar to notify the local authority)
- the pupil was granted leave of absence of more than ten days and then has failed to attend school within the ten days immediately following, and the Head Mistress is not satisfied that the pupil is unable to come to school because of illness or other unavoidable cause and the School and the local authority have failed, after making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is
- the pupil is certified by a medical officer that she is unfit to attend school
- the pupil has been absent continuously for a period of not less than four weeks, and neither the School nor the LEA, after reasonable enquiry, has been able to locate the pupil
- the pupil has died
- the child has ceased to be a pupil of the school
- the pupil is in custody for a period of more than four months and does not intend to return to school
- the pupil has been permanently excluded from the school
- the pupil has not met the academic entry requirements for admission to the School's sixth form

The Registrar will inform the appropriate LEA if the pupil has been withdrawn from the School.

**The Head of Year and/or Head of Section (the Head of Prep in the Prep Department) will:**

- Ensure that Form Tutors are following the correct procedures for registration
- Ensure that unaccounted for absence is followed up, as detailed above
- Check weekly and end-of-half-term printouts of attendance for pupils in their year group, identifying pupils whose attendance is a concern – i.e.
  - below 90%
  - irregular
  - shows an absence of more than ten consecutive days not covered by a medical certificate
    - Make checks on absence notes for such pupils
    - Follow up on such concerns with the pupil and the parent
- Ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and sanctions applied
- Investigate reasons for absence to ensure that there are no issues of bullying, safeguarding, equal opportunities or other issues
- Work with any pupil who has had protracted absence to assist with re-integration. In the case of serious debilitating illness, this may involve a staged return to school – for example, morning attendance only - if the pupil is not fully recovered. Rests in the Medical Room, under the supervision of the School Nurse, may be negotiated as part of the return to school, particularly during lessons that involve strenuous physical activity.
- Inform the Deputy Head (Pastoral) if a referral is needed to the LEA or Children's Services.
- Determine, in discussion with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) whether to authorise any absences that have taken place for which no prior request was made

**The Deputy Head (Pastoral) will:**

- Oversee attendance arrangements and take responsibility for the updating and operational management of registration and attendance monitoring procedures and implementation of sanctions by Form Tutors and Heads of Year
- Ensure that the school procedures, guidance to staff in the Staff Handbook and the Attendance

- Policy comply with current national legislation
- Work with the Registrar and Attendance Officer to ensure that the School's Admissions and Attendance registers comply with national legislation and are available for Inspection
  - Ensure that attendance and admissions registers are stored in the archives for three years
  - Keep the Head Mistress informed of any issues
  - Advise the Head Mistress of any strategies that could be initiated or procedures improved
  - Ensure that the procedures are made known to parents via the Parent Handbook
  - Analyse attendance registers at least once per term to monitor absence
  - Liaise with LEAs over persistent absentees where there is no medical reason for absence
  - Work with the Pastoral Team to initiate strategies for improving attendance
  - Identify whole school patterns of attendance annually
  - Ensure that Form Tutors and Heads of Year are recording and monitoring attendance and punctuality and taking effective action to address individual pupil concerns
  - Consider leave of absence requests of five to ten days, applying the principles outlined in this policy and ensuring that the absence will not impact on key assessments or events

The Deputy Head (Pastoral) will contact the Local Education Welfare Office or safeguarding authorities if:

- A pupil of compulsory school age has an absence of more than ten days and the absence has not been explained satisfactorily
- A pupil of compulsory school age has a pattern of irregular attendance (which can refer to persistent lateness)
- The parent asks for excessive leave of absence
- The parent condones unjustified absence on a regular basis
- There have been child protection issues and the absences may be related.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 allows schools to release the names of persistent truants to the police.

**The Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) will:**

- Ensure that departments record attendance and punctuality electronically via SIMS
- Ensure that pupil attendance is adequate for examination entry

**The Head Mistress**

- Is responsible for the strategic oversight of attendance procedures
- Ensures that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the school
- Considers parent requests for leave of absence that are more than ten school days
- Notifies parents that, if a pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly, her parents are committing an offence in law

**The Governing Body**

- Will monitor and review the implementation of the procedures

# ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

## Procedures for daily registration

- The School will maintain up-to-date registers of attendance
- The School will implement a standardised registration procedure that registers all pupils, including those over compulsory school age, twice daily. The register will be taken at 8.50 am and 2.05 pm
- The morning registration will be the responsibility of the Form Tutor, the Assistant Form Tutor, or the Cover Tutor if the Form Tutor/Assistant Form Tutor is absent. This is the responsibility of the Class Teacher in the Prep Department
- The afternoon registration will be the responsibility of the Period 5 teacher, or the Cover Teacher for the Period 5 lesson in the case of teacher absence
- Reasons for absence will be categorised as authorised or unauthorised, using standard codes. (See later sections on authorised and unauthorised absence.)
- Approved educational activities will be classified as attendance, and may be defined as activities which take place away from the school site that are:
  - approved by the Assistant Head (Co-Curricular) and Head Mistress
  - supervised by a person or persons approved by the Head Mistress
  - either an approved sporting activity or an activity of an educational nature such as work experience, field trips, educational visits and interviews with prospective employers or for a place in Higher Education.
- Tutorial registers will be closed 25 minutes after the start of the morning session (5 minutes if pupils are attending assemblies). Tutorial registers will be closed 5 minutes after the start of the afternoon session.
- Subject Teachers will record attendance and punctuality to all lessons via SIMS
- The School will discourage absence for reasons other than genuine illness or family bereavement. No absence for holidays will be authorised.

## Procedures for pupils arriving late to registration

School procedures for recording late arrivals to registration will be handled initially by the Form Tutor (morning registration) or the Period 5 subject teacher (afternoon registration) if the pupil arrives before the close of the registration/tutorial period.

- A pupil will be marked late in the register if she arrives after the register has been taken at 8.50am but before the close of registration, normally at 9.15am.
- A pupil will be marked late in the register if she arrives after the register has been taken at 2.05pm but before the end of the lesson.

After the close of registration, late arrivals will be recorded by the Attendance Officer.

- Pupils are expected to sign the Late Arrivals list on Reception.
- Arrivals after 9.15am will be recorded as N and a letter of explanation will be expected from parents.

## Consequences of late arrival

- The Form Tutor will be responsible for reprimanding the pupils on the first and second occasion of lateness, and for applying and supervising sanctions in proportion to the degree of lateness – extra work, a community task or informal detention.
- The Form Tutor is responsible for informing the Head of Year of pupils who continue to be late without valid transport reasons

- On the third occasion of lateness, the Head of Year will arrange to send a standard letter to parents and will arrange a formal lunchtime detention
- For repeated lateness, the Head of Year will arrange after-school detentions and will contact the parents by letter or telephone
- Persistent arrival after the attendance register has closed can be construed as irregular attendance and the School may therefore contact parents to discuss concerns relating to punctuality
- Sanctions will not be applied if the lateness is caused by the late arrival of a bus that normally arrives in time for the pupil to attend registration punctually. It is the responsibility of the Form Tutor to check this information with the Attendance Officer
- Subject teachers will apply sanctions for late arrival to lessons

### **Absence for individual tuition**

Pupils who attend individual Music or Speech and Drama tuition are permitted to miss one lesson or part of lesson from a particular subject each half term. Absence may also overlap registration. Pupils are expected to ask for permission in advance of the lesson or registration and to show their record card to the relevant teachers when requesting absence. Pupils who miss registration for this reason should sign in at Reception.

### **Absence procedures**

Parents are expected to telephone or email the school before 9.00 am on the first day of absence to notify the school of the reason for their daughter's absence. If a telephone call has not been received by 9.30am and there is no prior knowledge of the absence, the Attendance Officer (assisted by administrative staff if necessary) will contact parents by telephone to check that the pupil is at home ill.

Parents are expected to follow up this absence with an email to the Attendance Officer, providing a written explanation of absence, dated and signed. The Attendance Officer will decide whether the absence is justified (seeking advice from the Head of Year/Head of Section if necessary) and will enter the appropriate classification code in the electronic register.

### **Authorised absence**

An authorised absence is defined as absence for which the school has given approval in advance of the absence or has accepted a written explanation for absence from parents afterwards.

Acceptable reasons for absence would normally be illness or family bereavement. Interviews in Year 11 for FE courses or full-time employment are acceptable if advance notice is given, and a letter of invitation shown.

The School will not grant leave of absence for the pupil to undertake paid employment.

### **Absence for exceptional circumstances**

Such absence would include travel disruption such as:

- a weather-related emergency, such as snow or flooding
- a natural disaster, such as the impact on air travel of a volcanic eruption
- a health-related emergency, such as restrictions on travel in certain areas related to a foot and mouth outbreak
- travel disruption caused by the rationing or non-availability of fuel.

It may also include circumstances in which



- the school site was closed due to unavoidable cause
- a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption which has prevented the pupil from attending school

The Attendance Officer will use the appropriate code for absence, following government legislation in Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2024.

### **Leave of absence for religious observance**

In accordance with its Equality Policy, the School will permit leave of absence for a family celebration of the main festivals of the religion practiced by the pupil's family. The School expects parents to request such absence well in advance. Pupils may miss important teacher feedback on work previously completed or internal and external assessments, so the School asks parents to limit such absence to a maximum of three days per school year. Exceptions will be made if important religious festival days exceed this number for a particular religion in a particular year. Pupils will be expected to catch up on all the classwork and homework missed.

### **Leave of absence for family holidays**

Amendments made to the 2006 Regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013 came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013. Before this date, leave of absence could be permitted for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in 'special circumstances' of up to ten school days per year. Head Teachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances. Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as to the statutory threshold of ten school days. Head Teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances authorised in recent years have included:

- A reconnaissance visit to a country to which the family is considering emigration
- A visit that a single parent is obliged to make as part of her/his work, if it is not possible to make acceptable childcare arrangements with extended family members
- A religious pilgrimage (normally one only)
- A visit abroad to attend a very sick close relative of the pupil

Applications must be made to the Head Mistress (the Head of Prep in the Prep Department), in writing, by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. The application must be sent before bookings are made, and at least ten school days before the requested absence. The Head Mistress will consult with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the Head of Year, and will make a decision based on the age of the pupil; the time of year proposed; the nature of the visit; the assessment calendar and the academic progress and previous attendance record of the pupil.

The School reserves the right to refuse participation of trips and extra-curricular opportunities and to withdraw examination entry of pupils who have unauthorised absences.

### **Unauthorised absence**

Unauthorised absences need to be covered by a written communication from a parent. If these are not accounted for after five days of absence, they will remain unauthorised on the register.

Pupils who have missed lessons without authorisation will be placed by the Head of Year in after-school detentions until the time missed is made up and work missed has been completed. Parents will always be informed in this case, and normally parents will be asked to discuss the absence with the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

**Policy updated by the Deputy Head, Diana Bruce  
(September 2024)  
Approved by the Head Mistress September 2024**

Policy updated and reviewed by Deputy Head (Pastoral) September 2024.  
Approved by the Head Mistress September 2024