

MANCHESTER MUSLIM PREPARATORY SCHOOL

FAITH • LEARNING • LIFE

Attendance Policy

Document Control

This policy has been approved for operation within	Manchester Muslim Preparatory School
Date of last review	August 2020
Date of next review	Summer 2021
Review period	1 Year
Policy status	Statutory
Owner	MMPS

Attendance will be recorded in line with government guidelines published in the DfE guidance:

- School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (August 2020)
- Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year (August 2020)

Attendance Policy

Introduction

MMPS follows the Department for Education (DfE) regulations and guidance.

Regular and punctual school attendance is important and a legal responsibility on parents/carers. The School is required by law to record absences and late arrivals on a pupil's annual report.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority

DfE School Attendance Guidelines (2013):

- 'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils fulfil their potential in an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated- *pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education'.*
- *'Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards* of education and in ensuring every child can meet their full potential'.

Our policy applies to all pupils registered at this school and is made available to all parents/carers on our school website.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head Teacher and Trustees at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Staff procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Pupils who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning and develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

We expect our pupils to have an attendance percentage record of over 95% as the norm.

Independent schools must notify the Local Education Authority if a pupil does not attend regularly. The School will notify the appropriate local authority if a pupil has a low attendance of 85% or below, or if he/she is absent continuously without the School's authorisation for ten or more consecutive school days.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, Trustees and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and Trustees on school attendance matters
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance

Authorised Absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a pupil has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences reported by parents will be classified as authorised.
- If a pupil is absent for ten days or more, the parent must provide the class teacher with a medical certificate from the GP, or from the practitioner who is providing medical treatment.

Unauthorised Absence

The School is bound by DfE regulations. The DfE regards all absence which has not been authorised by the school as truancy.

Absence is classified as unauthorised in the following cases:

- if parents have failed to inform school of the reason for absence, either by phone or in writing
- if the reason for absence is unacceptable to the School
- if a pupil takes leave of absence without obtaining prior written permission
- if a pupil fails to return to school on the agreed date following an authorised leave of absence this includes unauthorised extension of a school holiday

Unauthorised absence is noted in a pupil's individual school record and may be reported to the relevant Local Education Authority.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes
- To maintain appropriate attendance data
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, Trustees, parents and pupils
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give details of any absence and lateness (BROMCOM)
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities, which individuals might have.

Class Teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Ensuring that the register is updated daily to include reasons provided for a pupil's absence
- Informing the Admissions Team- and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) where there are concerns and acting upon them

- Liaising with Admissions Team to send letters regarding concerns pertaining to absence to parents
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register (BROMCOM comment)
- Discussing attendance issues at parents' evenings where necessary

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Monitoring trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to the EWO (Education Welfare Office) service
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's EWO
- Liaising with other agencies to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence

Admin Staff

The Admissions Team has overall responsibility for maintaining registration records, monitoring attendance overall and ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the BROMCOM attendance software.

The admissions officer sends weekly attendance data to the Head Teacher, highlighting concerns; attendance data is shared with staff and discussed during the weekly SLT meeting.

Attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Admin staff will take on daily register-related tasks in the absence of admissions staff.

Duties and responsibilities of Admissions Team:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information and liaising with class teachers to ensure that letters from parents following absences are received and the register is updated accordingly
- Marking in pupils that are late on the BROMCOM attendance register, leaving a note, with their initials, on the register informing the class teacher of the time of arrival and reason for lateness
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed along with the BROMCOM record
- Go to each class after morning registration to double-check number of 'present' and 'absent' pupils
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early initial notes

- Admissions must keep an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Head Teacher
- Preparing a weekly attendance report for the head teacher, highlighting patterns of absence and lateness
- Maintaining Attendance File with weekly attendance report, medical appointment letters of pupils, leave of absence requests, attendance and punctuality concern / reminder letters sent to parents

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence and every morning of continued absence
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time; for the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist (appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with

Registration *Procedure adapted – see Covid 19 Addendum*

The start and end of the school day is staggered, a control measure listed in the 'MMPS Risk Assessment for School Re-opening'.

Registration Closure Times effective during staggered school day:

KS2	8:45 am (2 nd bell)
KS1 and Reception	9:00 am (3 rd bell)
Nursery:	9:15 am

Morning Registration

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

Attendance must be taken by the class teacher and closed in line with timings above.

Pupils arriving after closure of register will be signed in by Admissions and marked as late.

Afternoon Registration

The attendance register for the main school should be taken after pupils return to the classroom after lunch, closed and saved accordingly.

All attendance records are documented using BROMCOM software. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Attendance Register Codes (BROMCOM)

CODES	REASON
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	Child is late after register closes
В	Off-site educational activity
Ι	Child is absent because they are not well.
Μ	Medical/dental appointment
С	Authorised absence based on individual, exceptional circumstances.
V	Educational visit e.g. a school trip/residential
J	Entrance exam, interview at another school
Н	Holiday authorised by school (exceptional circumstances)
Ν	Child is absent and no reason has been given
R	Religious observance
Y	Exceptional circumstances e.g. due to an emergency or weather, school closure etc.
G	Un-authorised holiday or excess of authorised period
Р	Participating in a supervised sporting activity
0	Un-authorised absence
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus
	Not required to be in school (non-compulsory school age)
#	Planned whole or partial school closure

Lateness

Pupils arriving late must access school premises via main entrance gate (in staff car park) and enter the building via main entrance. Parents must accompany their child to the main door but are not permitted to enter the premises (Health & Safety – COVID-19).

Late pupils will be marked in by admin staff. Records are kept of pupils who are late. This is documented on the electronic register for each pupil by the admin staff (Attendance code L).

Pupils who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school after registration has closed will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Pupils who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each pupil is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

Parents/carers must contact the school on the first day of absence and all consecutive days throughout their child's absence. It is important that they provide us with details of the reason for the absence.

Where a pupil is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, we initiate a contact process, i.e. a member of the admin team will phone the parents and record a comment in BROMCOM next to the pupil's name. Admin staff will always initial comments to keep a record of who spoke to the parent. Class Teachers should liaise with the office staff to inform them of a pupil's unexplained absence and the admin staff will contact parents to determine the reasons for the pupil's absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Head Teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where the school has not received reasons for a pupil's absence for four consecutive days despite attempting to contact parents via telephone and T2P text messages, the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O).

If a child has an unauthorised absence for 10 days or more and the school has not been contacted by the parent and cannot get in touch with the parents, on the 11th day the school will have to notify the Local Authority under the Children Missing Education Guidelines 2016. The Local Authority will then take over the investigation and take appropriate action where necessary.

Illness also see Covid 19 Addendum

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school may decide to send work home. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. The school may seek written permission from parents to make its own enquiries.

A risk assessment will be carried out with the parents of a pupil who returns after a prolonged period of absence.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The required attendance set by the Department of Education guidelines is 97%. An attendance level of 95% and above is green. An attendance level between 90-94% is amber. Anything below 90% is a red.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher and the Trustees to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. At MMPS we rely upon parents to

ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. The Department of Education guidance also notes; "If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which [he/she is] registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for [him/her], the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority (LA)".

The requirement for parents to ensure their child receives a suitable "efficient full-time education ... either by regular attendance at school or otherwise" is set out in section 7 of the Education Act 1996.

Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters, which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a pupil's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral to EWS from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns. In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

Request for leave of absence

Pupils have missed several months of school during the Summer 2020 lockdown due to COVID – 19. Term time leave of absence will only be considered in *exceptional emergency* circumstances. All requests have to be made in writing, via email to the admin, clearly marked for the Attention the Head Teacher / Executive Head Teacher.