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**Pupil Attendance Policy**

**Reviewed: September 22**

**Next Review: September 23**

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**Music Stuff Education (MSE) Mission Statement and Policy Aim**

This policy applies to all Music Stuff Education (MSE) centres, staff, and pupils, including the specialist centre.

Our school is a registered independent secondary school which operates as a secondary alternative education provider and specialist SEMH school.

**Intervene-Support-Succeed** is fundamental to the philosophy at Music Stuff Education. We strive to provide an inclusive learning environment where every learner is empowered to progress and achieve.

Due to the specialism of the school, we are relatively small. Our school is split across 6 centres which admit between 10-30 pupils per site. Each centre has a specialist team of dedicated staff who facilitate all pastoral duties, and support teaching and learning.

As a school great importance is given to celebrating achievements and successes; we celebrate pupils’ achievement milestones (no matter how small). We work with each pupil individually to implement a stringent individual learning plan, which facilitates a deeper understanding of need; through this we support pupils in identifying and achieving their goals.

Pupils stay with us for varying lengths of time and are supported throughout transitions to new placements or schools where they are identified as the best long-term setting for the pupil.

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**This policy will aim to:**

* Demonstrate a strong attendance ethos that improves the overall attendance of pupils and reduces the number of persistently absent pupils.
* Develop a framework which identifies roles and responsibilities of the whole school community.
* Highlight a clear structure for promoting good attendance and tackling absence.
* Promote effective, non-bureaucratic systems for monitoring attendance.
* Encourage the use of attendance data and other information to improve school and pupil performance.
* Promote the general importance and legal requirements of good attendance to pupils and their parent/carers.
* Enable early intervention when an individual pupil’s absence gives cause for concern.
* Install clear support systems for vulnerable pupils.
* Celebrate good and improved attendance.
* Promote effective partnerships with external support agencies and the Local Authority.

**1.Introduction**

1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if pupils are to achieve their full potential.

1.2 MSE believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling pupils to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

1.3 MSE value all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

1.4 MSE recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

**2.Legal Framework**

2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parent/carers must ensure that pupils 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.

2.2 A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

2.3 Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parent/carers secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

2.4 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 and Department for Education - School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (July 2019) require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

2.5 The register must record whether the pupil was:

* present
* absent
* present at approved educational activity
* unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

**3.Categorising absence**

3.1 Where pupils are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

3.2 **Absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher and** **cannot be authorised by parent/carer**. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil’s absence has been received.

3.3 Parent/carers must advise the MSE learning centre their child attends by telephone, on the first day of absence and provide an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate.

3.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:

3.5 **Illness**

Parent/carer may be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the Headteacher to authorise absence where appropriate. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

3.6 **Medical/Dental appointments**

Parent/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils must attend school for part of the day. Parent/carer must show the appointment card to school.

3.7 **Other authorised circumstances**

This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances.

3.8 **Excluded (no alternative provision made)**

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The pupil’s MSE learning centre will plan for work to be sent home.

3.9 Parent/carers who need to take their child out of school during term time due to **exceptional circumstances** must complete an ‘Application for leave of absence from school’ prior to making any arrangements and return it to the Headteacher. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

3.9.1 All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing outlining the conditions of leave granted.

3.9.2 If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parent/carer has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school’s roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013. This means that the pupil will lose their school place.

3.9.3 If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent/carer takes their child out of school the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may request the local authority issue a penalty notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the magistrate’s court.

3.10 **Religious observance**

MSE 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. Parent/carers must complete an ‘Application for leave of absence from school’ prior to the religious observance and return it to the Headteacher. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

3.11 **Study leave**

Study leave **may** be granted for year 11 pupils approaching GCSE examinations. School will offer school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels.

3.12 **Traveller absence**

It is expected that Traveller children, in common with all other children, attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

3.12.1 To protect Traveller parent/carers from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent/carer is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

3.12.2 When in or around Manchester, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

3.12.3 MSE will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school. In such cases, the pupil’s school place at MSEwill be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

3.12.4 MSE can only effectively operate as the child’s base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parent/carers must:

* advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
* inform the school regarding proposed return dates

3.12.5 MSE will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

3.12.6 Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

* The child is on roll and attending another visited school
* Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority’s Traveller Education Service
* The child is undertaking computer-based distance learning that is time evidenced

3.12.7 Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil and appropriate statutory action may be undertaken.

3.13 **Late arrival**

Morning registration is between 8.45am and 9.15am. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late (L). The register will close at 10am, pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late (U). This will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session and statutory action may be taken where appropriate.Afternoon registration is at 1.00pm.

3.13.1 On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the MSE learning centre office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

3.13.2 The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

3.13.3 The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause.

3.14 Unauthorised absence will not be authorised unless parent/carer has provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the Headteacher.

3.14.1 Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

* A pupil/family member’s birthday
* Shopping for uniforms
* Having their hair cut
* Closure of a sibling’s school for INSET (or other) purposes
* “Couldn’t get up”
* Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
* Family holidays

**4.Deletions from the Register**

4.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

* The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
* The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
* The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
* Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
* Death of a pupil
* Transfer between schools
* Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
* Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
* A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
* In custody for more than four months (in discussion with the Youth Offending Team)
* 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
* Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
  1. MSE will follow relevant Local Education Authorities’ Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil’s whereabouts is unknown.

**5.Roles and Responsibilities**

5.1 MSE believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parent/carers, pupils and the wider school community.

As such, the Governing Body and strategic leadership team will:

* Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parent/carers
* Form positive relationships with pupils and parent/carers
* Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
* Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
* Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and designated staff are adequately trained to address attendance issues
* Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
* Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
* Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time
* Report the school’s attendance and related issues through regular reporting to the Governing Body
* Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
* Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
* Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
* Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
* Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

5.2 Learning Centre Managers and staff/Teachers and Attached Teachers/ Pastoral Teamwill:

* Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parent/carers
* Form positive relationships with pupils and parent/carers
* Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
* Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation
* Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
* Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
* Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
* Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
* Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

5.3 Request that Parent/carerswill:

* Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child’s work and educational progress
* Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
* Encourage their child to look to the future and aspire to be the best they can
* Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
* Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours
* Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
* Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child’s attendance
* Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child’s education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
* Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
* Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, where this is unavoidable, and only in exceptional circumstances send an ‘Application for leave of absence from school’ to the Headteacher.

**6.Support Systems**

6.1 MSE recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child’s life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parent/carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child’s attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

6.2 MSE also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

6.3 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

* Discussion with parent/carers and pupils
* Attendance Officer Attendance Panels
* Senior Management Team Attendance Panels
* Parent/carer contracts
* Referrals to support agencies
* Pupil voice activities
* PSHE
* Time limited part time timetables
* Additional learning support
* Behaviour support
* Reintegration support
* Early Help Assessments

6.4 Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parent/carers and pupils.

6.5 Where parent/carer fails or refuses to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, MSE will consider the use of legal sanctions.

**7. Legal Sanctions**

7.1 **Prosecution**

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates’ Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parent/carers realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

7.1.1 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent/carer fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

7.1.2 A parent/carer found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

7.1.3 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parent/carer Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

7.2 **Penalty Notices** (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

* A pupil is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the school
* A pupil has accrued unauthorised absence following written warning to improve.

7.2.1 A Penalty Notice gives the parent/carer 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.

7.2.2 Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

7.2.3 Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council’s Penalty Notice Protocol.

**Appendix A**

* Registration takes place between **9.00 and 9.30am.**
* The N code is used to mark the absence where no reason for absence has yet been given.
* Initial attendance marks should be recorded by **9.15am** on the register and updated following first day calling. This should be completed by **10.00am**, establishing the whereabouts of all pupils.
* PSOs should input data on attendance management systems (AMS) by **10.00am**.
* School administration team should update commissioning partners of attendance by **10.00am**.
* N marks changed to the appropriate code by **10.00am.**
* **10am – 11am** PSOs to carry out daily checks of attendance in their centres and continue to contact students, further amend coding for accuracy and record comments of communication and requests.
* Afternoon registers must be completed and sent in by **1.30pm**.
* PTTT coding must not be pre-populated. N codes must be used until the student has arrived at centre and attended for the session. At this stage a present mark with a note indicating arrival time should be used and then a C code in place of the session not attended.
* Exclusion marks must not be prepopulated. They must be entered as per standard procedures with an accompanying comment.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Parent/carer does not answer:** |  | **Parent/carer answers and provides a reason for absence:** |  | **Parent/carer answers and provides a reason for absence that is deemed inadequate:** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. **All contact numbers should be tried.** 2. **A follow up text sent to request a call back** 3. **Centre attendance team / PSO to record comments via registers and where there are safeguarding concerns on CPOMS.** |  | **The appropriate attendance registration code will be entered on the register**  **Including comments for all codes other than present. Where there are safeguarding concerns on CPOMS.**  **If a child has an absence longer than 5 school days and has not been seen a HV must be considered.** |  | **Parent/carer is verbally informed that the reason for absence is not justified and will not be authorised.**  **The appropriate attendance registration mark will be entered on the register. The appropriate attendance registration code will be entered on the register**  **Including comments for all codes other than present. Where there are safeguarding concerns on CPOMS.** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Day 2 - As per day 1. HV to be considered if no contact on day 3.**  **Day 3 – Calls attempted –prior to home visit being requested.**  **During a home visit the child MUST be seen. If the child is not seen by staff the visit is deemed unsuccessful and next steps taken.**  **The centre will be informed of outcome and a note will be recorded on AMS and CPOMS where necessary.**  **If there is no answer at the home, a HV calling card will be left asking for the parent/carer to make urgent contact.** |  | **Where there are repeated periods of reported illness or unauthorised absence or if regular patterns to absence occur parents/guardians will be asked to provide supporting medical evidence.**  **Red Letter 1 will be issued in accordance with the school’s escalation of interventions. This is recorded on CPOMS using the tag Red Concern Letter 1 under the Attendance Procedures Category.**  **Learning centres will initiate an Attendance Action Plan for that student. This is for a minimum period of two weeks. A copy of the completed action plan should be uploaded to CPOMS using the Learning Centre Action Plan tag under the Attendance Procedures category.** | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **If absence persists or no contact is received the school will liaise with PSO/ attendance officer for next steps which may include:**   * **CME procedures** * **contact with any relevant agencies,** * **A police safe and well check request** * **Call to children's services may be requested.**   **Actions will be recorded on CMS/AMS and further details on CPOMS.** |  | **Where a student’s attendance continues to decrease and drops below 60% MSE PSOs will send out a Red Action letter 2. This communicates concerns from our attendance team and highlights support from available from school and additional agencies such as Early Help.**  **Attendance that drops below 50% will be more closely monitored and may include daily checks as per escalation of interventions.** | | |

**Appendix B**

**ESCALATION OF INTERVENTIONS**

**GOLD 100%**

* MSE expects every pupil to attend on time every day. A pupil should only be absent if there is an unavoidable cause such as illness.
* Pupils with 100% attendance for a half term, term and school year will be acknowledged and celebrated.
* A pupil who is on a part time timetable can achieve 100% if they attend for the agreed time expected.

**GREEN 90%- 99%**

* The target for all MSE pupils is 95%
* There is a strong link between attendance and attainment. Every effort must be made to avoid absences although it is recognised that on occasion a pupil may be unavoidably unable to attend.
* MSE will implement its daily absence procedures as required (Appendix A)

**RED 90% and below**

Pupils who have attendance below 90% are considered to be persistently absent by the Department for Education. All absence is a cause for concern as pupils are missing out on learning opportunities that may impact upon their educational development. Attendance below 90% will trigger support and guidance being offered to families. Parents must engage with MSPRU to find solutions and/or ensure their child’s learning is best supported. The voice of the child will be captured when identifying the most suitable interventions.

**RED Action 60% and below**

* MSE staff will initiate interventions such as Attendance Officer/ PSO / teacher speaking to the pupil about any concerns they have. A letter (Red Action 2) will be sent to parents/ carers highlighting attendance concerns. Attendance concern meetings and or home visits will be arranged by the Attendance Officer as necessary on a case-by-case basis.
* It would be expected that medical evidence be provided for any prolonged (5 or more days) or repeated illness (3 times in any half term) and unauthorised absences may lead to a penalty notice or prosecution.
* MSE will implement its daily absence procedures as required and parents/carers will receive escalating letters to notify them of concerns.

**RED Action Alert 50% and below**

MSE will implement daily absence procedures as required and parents/ carers will be asked to provide medical evidence in order for absences to be authorised.

Where previous interventions have already been implemented and have had unsatisfactory impact, the parent / carer will be invited to an Attendance Panel (Red Action Alert Letter 3a) where the possible outcomes will be:

* Completion of an EHA leading to multi agency support
* Referral to Children’s Social Care if there are safeguarding concerns
* Referral to the Local Authority to initiate legal proceedings

A copy of the meeting minutes and subsequent actions (Letter 3b) will be sent home and a copy uploaded to CPOMS. This will be reviewed after a period of two weeks and if no improvement a FPN will be sent out by Attendance Officer. (Letter 3c)

**Critical below 20%**

Senior MSE staff/ Asst Head/ Pastoral Manager/Attendance staff/ Head of Centre to action procedures to address non-attendance. Placement review/ previous actions/ Multi Agency involvement reviewed, and action plan instigated to resolve failing placement.

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195 Fog Lane

Burnage

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Dear ***Parent/Carer,***

***Pupil name***, registered pupil at ***Centre name, Attendance %***

***Pupil name*** attendance has dropped below 90% and therefore has been highlighted as a cause for concern. Music Stuff has an attendance target of 95% and as ***Pupil name*** *falls below this, we must now initiate an Attendance Action Plan*.

As a school we strive to always have high expectations of our pupils including their attendance. We will continue to monitor ***Pupil Name’s*** attendance and if it does not improve you may receive further communication from us.

If you need any support with this, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Diagram

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Mr M. T. McCann (MA, BA. Hons)

Headteacher

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