

**Pupil Attendance Policy**

**Completed by: Lianne Cole, Deputy Headteacher DSL August 2024**

**Approved by Governors**

**To be reviewed: September 2025**

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**1. Introduction**

School attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

Music Stuff Education believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who can realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Music Stuff Education values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school and identify the reasons for poor attendance.

Music Stuff Education recognise 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 admissions, safeguarding, anti-bullying, child protection, safeguarding and behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education’s (DfE’s) statutory guidance on ***Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024***), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

* Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
* Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
* Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
* Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
* Acting early to address patterns of absence
* Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school
* We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

**2. Legal Framework**

This policy is based on the Department for Education’s (DfE’s) statutory guidance ‘Working together to improve school attendance (effective from 19th August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures.

The guidance is based on the following legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

* Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
* Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
* Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
* The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
* The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

* School Census Guidance
* Keeping Children Safe in Education
* Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

**3. Safeguarding**

Every pupil should be able learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. We respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn and participate in all school activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers. Safeguarding is about offering early help and support to children and families and difficulties with attendance and lateness may be signs that something is worrying the child or that there are difficulties within the family. Poor or irregular attendance, persistent lateness, or children missing from education may be considered a safeguarding matter if this places a child at risk of harm.

Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone’s responsibility and within the context of this school; safeguarding and promoting the welfare and life opportunities for children encompasses: Attendance, Behaviour Management, Health and Safety, Access to the Curriculum and Anti- bullying, protecting children from abuse and neglect, online safety, radicalisation and extremism, FGM and CSE.

More information on safeguarding and the protection of children can be found in the schools *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.*

In order to allow us to safeguard the children in our care it is important that parents and carers provide the school with their current contact details and provide at least three other contact numbers in case of emergency.

It is also important for parents inform the school of any specific vulnerability in relation to their child or home circumstances.

**4. Categorising Absence**

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

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

Parents must advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer in relation to appointments/long term illness.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

**Illness** - Parents 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.

**Medical/Dental Appointments** - Parents 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. Parents must show the appointment card to school.

**Other Authorised Circumstances** - This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances.

**Suspended** (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child’s centre manager will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

**Religious Observance** - Music Stuff Education acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration by written request by the parent of authorised absence.

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

**Traveller Absence** - It is expected that Traveller children, in common with all other children, are to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible (see Appendix 5)

**Late Arrival** - Registration begins at 9.00am pupils arriving after 9.15am will be marked as present but arriving late (code L). The register will close at 9.30am and pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late (code U) this is not authorised. The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause.

**Unauthorised absence** - Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the Headteacher.

**A full list of the Department for Education (DfE) Registration Codes can be found in Appendix 2**

**Requests for leave of absence**

All requests for leave of absence in term, including holidays, will be responded to in writing. The form is found in Appendix 1 and must be completed and returned to the centre manager who will log this on CPOMS and email to the Headteacher for consideration.

If a pupil fails to return from a leave of absence and contact with the parents 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 child will lose their school place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent 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. This will follow Manchester Statutory Action Escalation Pathway

**5. Roles and Responsibilities**

**Governance:**

The governing board is responsible for:

* Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school’s policies and ethos
* Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
* Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
* Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
* Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
* Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
* Making sure that the schools attendance management system is delivered effectively
* Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils but adapts processes to pupils individual needs

**The Headteacher:**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

* Implementation of this policy at the school
* Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
* Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
* Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
* Requesting statutory action in line with Manchester’s Statutory Action Escalation Pathway or authorising alongside the Deputy Headteacher with strategic responsibility for attendance
* Ensuring effective communication between school, the Local Authority and parents/carers of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEND) where there are barriers to attendance which relates to the pupils needs
* Following Manchester City Council’s Children Missing Education (CME) Protocol when a pupil’s whereabouts is unknown

**The designated Senior Leader responsible for School Attendance**:

The designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

* Leading attendance across the school
* Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
* Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
* Having an oversight of data analysis
* Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
* Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
* Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
* Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they are followed by all staff

The designated Senior Leader responsible for Attendance is Lianne Cole and can be contacted via mobile07957353968 or email l.cole@musicstuffeducation.org

**The Attendance Officer:**

The school attendance officer’s role is part of the designated leader’s responsibilities as Music Stuff Education do not have this role as part of their staffing structure. So the Lead for attendance also has responsibility for (alongside support from the Pastoral Support Officers):

* Monitoring and analysing attendance data
* Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
* Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to Headteacher
* Working with the local authority and other key stakeholders to tackle persistent and severe absence
* Liaising with the headteacher as to when a request for statutory action in line with Manchester’s Statutory Action Escalation Pathway is appropriate.

**Centre Managers and Assistant Managers:**

Centre Managers and Assistant Managers are responsible for:

* Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on Arbor by 9.45am
* Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system Arbor and any safeguarding concerns reported to the PSDO/DSL and recorded on CPOMS
* Make daily calls to parent/cares if pupils who have not attended school and who we have had no contact from
* Identify pupils who need a home visit based on the 2 day no contact and 5 day no attendance procedure by requesting a home visit by the PSO on Arbor.
* Complete attendance action plans with those pupils who are persistently absent as per escalation policy.

**Pastoral Support Officers:**

Our PSOs are responsible for:

* Daily checks of Arbor for register marks and comments to ensure accuracy
* Identifying home visit requests via Arbor
* Sending registers to direct schools and Manchester Secondary PRU by 10am each morning
* Completing home visits for absent pupils
* Supporting families who struggle to get their children to attend school by offering Early Help assessments, referrals to other agencies and arranging parental meetings in school
* Identifying pupils who need to be discussed at SLT panel meetings

**School administrator:**

The school administrator is responsible for:

* Sending attendance registers to direct schools and Manchester Secondary PRU in the afternoons and sending full weekly attendance every Friday including attendance certificates
* Sending letters related to attendance and attendance procedures to parent/carer as directed by the DSL
* Supporting the Attendance lead with data analysis
* Supporting centre staff with Arbor

**Parents/carers:**

Parents/carers are expected to:

* Make sure their child attends every day on time
* Call the school to report their child’s absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
* Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
* Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
* Engage with school support aimed at improving school attendance
* Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance by contacting the centre manager or allocated Pastoral Support Officer

**Pupils:**

Pupils are expected to:

* Attend school every day on time
* Attend every timetabled session on time

**6. Attendance Data**

**Use of Attendance Data**

The school will:

* Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
* Identify whether there are groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern or particular cohorts of pupils where attendance is affecting their achievement/outcomes.
* The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.
* The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Governing Board.

**Analysing attendance data**

The school will:

* Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
* Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
* Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence

**Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

* Provide regular attendance reports to centre managers and Pastoral Support Officers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
* Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
* Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families

**Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

* Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
* Follow MSE Attendance escalation procedures as per Appendix 2
* Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
* Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
* Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education

**Support Systems**

Music Stuff Education recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties and trauma in a child’s life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents 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. It is expected that the child and their family work collaboratively with school to identify the anxiety-based school avoidance resources most appropriate for support and to accept the support that is offered or advised

Music Stuff Education also recognise 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 children with a social worker

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance for all pupils. Strategies used will include: celebrating good and improved attendance, displaying attendance within the centre so pupils take ownership of their own attendance, discuss attendance as part of keywork sessions, making attendance everyone’s responsibility within the school and ensuring that parent/carers are aware of their child’s attendance when discussing progress and attending meetings. All pupils who are persistently absent will have an Attendance Action Plan which is completed with the pupil and parent/carer, which identifies issues/barriers, sets targets and identifies incentives and support needed.

Other support may include:

* Referrals can also be made to the Early Help Hub and the EBSA pathway for further support
* Time limited part time timetables
* TAC meetings to discuss underlying support needs and to discuss possible bespoke alternative offers of education to improve emotional well-being, mental health and motivation to learn.

If a pupil has an Education, Health & Care plan, Music Stuff Education will communicate with Manchester City Council EHCP Team at an early stage once they become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the child’s needs

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Music Stuff Education may consider the use of legal sanctions following Manchester City Councils Code of Conduct

**Legal Sanctions**

Music Stuff Education will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis

**Penalty notices**

Manchester City Council, upon a request from school, can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice before requesting a legal sanction, the school will consider the individual case, including:

* Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
* Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
* Whether appropriate support has been put in place
* Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing
* a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil’s offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence

The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

 **Notice to Improve**

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, a Notice to Improve letter will be issued in line with processes set out in by Manchester City Council’s Code of Conduct. This will include a clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn’t improve within the monitoring period which will be up to 6 weeks. Sufficient improvement will be decided on a case-by-case basis.



**Appendix 3 – Attendance Procedure Flow Chart**

Parent/carer answers and provides a reason for absence that is deemed inadequate:

* Registration takes place between 8.45 and 9.15am, anyone arriving before 9.15 is marked present, between 9.15-9.30 L code, after 9.30am U code
* The N code is used to mark the absence where no reason for absence has been given.
* First day calling should be completed by 9.45am, establishing the whereabouts of all pupils. N marks changed by the end of the day if possible and legally within 5 days.
* Attendance should be logged via Arbor by 10am at the latest and 1pm in the afternoon, including time of arrival
* 10.00am-11.00am Allocated PSO to check and monitor register marks, discuss with Centre Managers about missed marks and accuracy of comments. Highlight pupils who need a home visit
* All registers to be sent to MSPRU and direct schools by 10am and 1.30pm by PSOs/admin team

Parent/carer answers and provides a reason for absence:

Parent/carer does not answer:

All contact numbers should be tried.

A follow up text sent to request a call back

Centre Manager/Assistant manager to record comments on Arbor

If no call back, try again in the afternoon and note in comments for pm register

The appropriate attendance registration code will be entered on the register

Including comments for all codes other than present.

If illness is reported, ask for specific symptoms

Where there are safeguarding concerns, note this in the comments as ‘see CPOMS’.

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 alongside note.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, note this in the comments as ‘see CPOMS’

Day 2 - As per day 1. HV requested for following day if no contact, logged on Arbor

Day 3 – Calls attempted prior to home visit being carried out, the centre will be informed of outcome and a note will be recorded on Arbor and CPOMS

If there is no answer at the home, a failed HV letter will be left asking for the parent/carer to make urgent contact.

After 5 days of non attendance, for any reason, home visit to be requested via Arbor and visit logged on CPOMS

**Appendix 4 – Escalation of Interventions**

**ESCALATION OF INTERVENTIONS**

**STAGE 1 - 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.

**Actions:** **Red Letter 1** should be send via email/post to parent/carer and logged on CPOMS as directed by DSL

Support available to be offered:

* Keyworker meeting with pupil to discuss reasons for non attendance
* Parental support meeting
* Short term target setting
* Referral to school nurse
* Other:

All to be logged on CPOMS under ***attendance procedures – Stage 1 intervention***

**STAGE 2 – 75% and below**

As soon as a pupil hits 75%, this triggers a Pupil Attendance Action Plan. This needs to be completed by centre manager or keyworker alongside the pupil and in conversations with parent/carer for their views.

**Actions:** **Red Letter 2** to be sent via email or post to parent/carer. Complete an **Attendance Action Plan** and upload onto CPOMS under Attendance procedures – attendance action plan. Identify targets for improvement and review in 2-6 weeks.

Further support to be offered:

* Referral to Early Help
* Referral to MThrive/EBSNA pathway
* Referral to the school nurse
* Invitation to an Attendance Panel meeting
* Referral to SLT to discuss in panel
* Timetable review via a TAC meeting with Centre manager, PSO and family – any changes to be authorised via SLT

**STAGE 3 - 50% and below**

Pupils who have attendance below 50% are considered to be severely absent by the Department for Education.

**Actions:**

* **Red Letter 3** to be sent out to parent/carers via email or post
* Invitation to an Attendance panel meeting with DSL/SENCO/PSO
* Referral to Early Help
* Referral to the EBSNA pathway
* Timetable review via a TAC meeting with Centre manager, PSO and family – any changes to be authorised via SLT
* Fixed penalty warning letter – via Attendance Lead/DSL, if all the above has been completed and no improvements seen
* LA Notice to Improve letter – via Attendance lead/DSL, if all the above has been completed and no improvements seen

**STAGE 4 - Critical below 20%**

All support detailed above has been ineffective and attendance continues to drop and is now below 20%. To be escalated by DSL, supported by PSO.

**Actions:**

**Red Letter 4 to be sent out to parents.**

From this point, the LA would have issued a Notice to Improve letter to families and if we are still reporting issues with non attendance and lack of engagement in the support we have offered up until this point then the LA will continue with their procedures in terms of penalty notices.

* First Action – fixed penalty notice from LA £80 per parent
* Second Action – fixed penalty notice £180 per parent
* Discussion with Social Care in their drop ins to discuss educational neglect – by PSO
* Referral to PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Panel)
* Other – Court proceedings, educational supervision orders etc.

