



Merchant Taylors'  
School

# Attendance Policy MTGS

Policy owner:	Assistant Head Pastoral and Assistant Head Operations
Type of policy:	Regulatory
Regulatory Body:	Department for Education / Independent Schools Inspectorate
Relevant Legislation / Guidance:	<p>(Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended)</p> <p>Education and Skills Act 2008</p> <p>Children Act 1989</p> <p>Childcare Act 2006</p> <p>Education (Pupil Registration Regulations) 2006;</p> <p>Equality Act 2010; and</p> <p>Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)</p> <p>Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, applies from September 2022)</p> <p>Keeping children safe in education (DfE, September 2023);</p> <p>School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures (DfE, May 2020);</p> <p>Children missing education (DfE, September 2016)</p> <p>Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (DfE, August 2017)</p> <p>Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, September 2022)</p>



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	<p>Mental health and behaviour in schools (DfE, November 2018)</p> <p>Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (DfE, February 2023)</p> <p>Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (DfE, February 2023)</p> <p>SEND Code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department of Health, May 2015)</p> <p>KCSIE 2023</p>
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### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Pupil attendance at Merchant Taylors' Girls' School is generally excellent. Many girls will go for an entire year without missing any school and most girls and their parents will usually keep any absence to a minimum. Attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing and development. DfE research has shown the following impact that absence can have on a child's academic achievement:

<b>Student attendance</b>	<b>Chance of achieving 5 good pass grades at GCSE</b>
100%	96% 73% of Students achieve 5 good pass grades
96% - 94%	64% of Students achieve 5 good pass grades
93% - 90%	55% of Students achieve 5 good pass grades
80% to 70%	20% chance of achieving 5 good pass grades
50% and below	6% of Students achieve 5 good pass grades

The School will respond to non-attendance and / or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding and behaviour policies. It will act in a proportionate and targeted way in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed and parents are actively involved with the process and resulting strategies.

There are two broad categories of absence:

#### **Authorised absence**

Authorised absence is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised. It is the Headteacher, not parents who make the decision to authorise absence from school. Absences though illness may be authorised if appropriate medical evidence is provided to the school.

#### **Unauthorised absence**

Unauthorised absence is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, weddings, family holidays to look after siblings
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been explained.



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Each child is expected to be in school at the start of the school day. Registers are marked by 08:40am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. At 08:50am the registers will be closed. If your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be present on site, but this will not count as a present mark and will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

### **Procedures to be followed in case of absence during normal School opening:**

- Tutors and teaching staff will only mark as present girls who are actually in the room at am or pm registration (Period 4 lesson).
- Reception will amend the register to record the presence of those who are late who have been attending a school activity such as music or sporting activities. This will be communicated to reception internally and it is not necessary for parents themselves to notify reception.
- Parents are asked to notify Reception and the form tutor when their child is absent as appropriate. Any absences which have not been reported are first checked to see if the student is in school. If she is not, reception will ring home to find out the reason for absence.
- If further attempts to contact the parents are unsuccessful, friends will be asked if they know where the child is. Our primary concern in these cases is that a child has left for school and has failed to arrive.
- Where a pupil is to leave school for an authorised reason (e.g. a medical or dental appointment) parents are asked to notify their daughter's Head of House. It is the responsibility of the pupil to sign out at reception at the agreed time. As a matter of courtesy, we would ask that pupils notify, via school email, the teachers of the lessons from which they will be absent.

### **Internal Absenteeism**

Any pupil who does not attend a lesson without an authorised and valid reason (regardless of whether or not they have left the school premises) will be deemed to have truanted and will be sanctioned in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy.

For note, pupils who attend lessons, including PE, away from the school premises have the burden of responsibility to ensure that they present themselves to the member of staff in charge of the lesson at the remote site.

In line with DfE guidance and KCSIE 2023, internal absenteeism also covers authorised time out of lessons and includes toilet and School Nurse visits. These are monitored as follows:

### **School Nurse**

The School Nurse will record the visit (including the reason) of every pupil. Parents of these pupils will be notified electronically at the end of each school day.



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### Toilet visit

Pupils are allowed to leave class to use the designated toilet facilities. Staff are asked to record on 3Sys (the School's secure database system). Heads of House monitor toilet attendance weekly; where an abnormal frequency is identified, a sensitive discussion will take place with the pupil and her parents surrounding necessary medical intervention and further support that may be required.

### Codes used in the event of an absence:

*All absences must be followed up to ensure that we have an explanation and the correct code should be entered in the register by the Form Tutor, Head of House or receptionist and will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department for Education.*

<b>Mark</b>	<b>Mark_Description</b>	<b>Statistical_Meaning</b>
-	All should attend / No mark recorded	No mark
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Attendance not required
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
8	Late Medical	Present
B	Off-site educational activity	Approved Educational Activity
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised
D	Dual Registered	Approved Educational Activity
E	Excluded	Authorised
F	Extended Family Holiday	Authorised
G	Family holiday (Not agreed)	Unauthorised
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised
I	Illness	Authorised
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity
K	Late lunch / Conversation lesson	Present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised
O	Unauthorised Abs	Unauthorised
P	Sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity
Q	Late Bus	Present
R	Religious observance	Authorised
S	Study Leave	Authorised



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T	Traveller absence	Authorised
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised
V	Educational visit	Approved Educational Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity
X	Not required to be in school	Attendance not required
Y	Exceptional circumstances	Attendance not required
Z	Not on register	Attendance not required



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### Monitoring Attendance

The School has robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or

The School will undertake regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the School and develop strategies to address them. Such analysis may include:

- Percentage attendance reports in order to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance and those who are persistently absent and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.
- Weekly attendance patterns and trends and provide support in a targeted way to pupils and families; regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including the Special Educational Needs Coordinator and Assistant Head, Pastoral and DSL)
- Half-termly, termly, and full year reports to identify patterns and trends
- benchmark attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Specific strategies will be implemented to address areas of poor attendance identified through data analysis and these themselves will be monitored to assess their school-wide impact

The weekly attendance reports that are produced will be analysed at the Pastoral Meeting. The trigger point for intervention is between 95% -97%. Please see the monitoring grid below:

Attendance below 97% but above 95%	Emerging cause for concern. Discussion between Form Tutor to identify if there are any underlying concerns or worries indicating that extra support needs to be put in place. If so this will be addressed.
Attendance below 95% but above 90%	Frequent Absence. A cause for concern Email/ phone call home from Head of House and a meeting with the Form Tutor and Head of House. Should there be an underlying concern or worry, parents will be contacted, and the Form Tutor will work with the student and her parents to put a plan of support in place.  The school may liaise, in collaboration with parents, with external services or professionals such as the pupil's GP and Local Authority Early Help Services as additional support may be needed.



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Attendance below 90%	Persistent Absence A serious cause for concern: Email home from Head of House, meeting with the Head of House. Support Plan out in place/reviewed.
Attendance below 85%	Email/phone call home from Assistant Head Pastoral or Assistant Head Operations. Meeting with Head of House, Parents and Assistant Head. Support plan reviewed.  Refer to Local Authority for advice and intervention, where appropriate
Attendance below 75%	On-going intervention in conjunction with Local Authority and external agencies.

**As part of the School's monitoring process, parents should be aware of the following:**

- If a pupil has continued absence, without parental contact, will be report to DSL and treated as a safeguarding concern. External agencies, including the Local Authority may be contacted.
- Where a pupil has ten days' absence, the School will follow DfE guidance on reporting to the Local Authority
- Unauthorised absence due to holidays during term time will be declined. The Law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. Without this permission, the absence will remain as unauthorised. The time allocated for half term holidays and holidays at Christmas, Easter and the Summer are particularly generous.
- Parents are encouraged to make dental and medical appointments outside of schooltime, but we recognise that this is not always possible and facilitate where possible. Where medical appointments are available online, we have on occasion facilitated this taking place at MTGS, reducing the need to be absent for a whole session.
- Form tutors monitor lateness each week. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their Form Tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons and this can be embarrassing and upsetting for the pupil. Lateness can also encourage absence as some pupils would rather not attend school at all than arrive late.
- Pupils who have received three lates are flagged, receive a detention, and parents are informed. Sixth form pupils do not receive a detention, but three lates results in a loss of privileges, and they are unable to sign in and out for a day. All parents are able to view daily, weekly and termly attendance and Lateness records for their daughter on firefly.
- Parents will receive an email if their daughter has accumulated three lates and therefore will sit an after-school detention.





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- Sixth Form – Sixth form pupils are able to self-certify when they are absent due to ill health, University interviews etc. However, we hold the same high expectations of attendance and punctuality as for all pupils at MTGS. Receptionists, Form tutors and HOH will monitor sixth form attendance and lateness in the same way as for all other pupils. Unreported absence will be flagged with parents.

### **Children Missing from Education**

Where a child has been removed from the school's roll either by parents or the school itself, the school recognises that the child becomes a "most vulnerable child". The school will ensure that:

- a. The parent gives 1 term's notice
- b. During this period, the school will formally write to the parent to obtain confirmation of the proposed school to which the child will attend upon leaving Merchant Taylors
- c. A member of the admissions team will make contact with the proposed school to confirm that the child has been offered a place.
- d. A CME form will be submitted to the local authority, either confirming the details of the proposed school or advising that the child does not have a planned future education provision.
- e. Where a child is added to the School's roll, a member of the admissions team will

\*This process is not applicable at the key transition years of 6,11,13

### **Assistance**

Pupils who are training for Sports at international level competitions are provided with work that can be accessed remotely and completed via our Firefly learning platform. Subject tutors are able to review work set and give regular assessments and feedback. If training takes that pupil away from school over a prolonged period of time then a weekly TEAMS meeting is arranged between Head of House, parents and external tutors to ensure that the work covered is appropriate to ensure progress alongside their peers.

Pupils with ongoing health concerns that have necessitated hospitalisation or substantial time away from school have been provided with written work and online access to work via Firefly: though the expectation is that pupils will only access this if their health allows and school is guided in this respect by the medical advice of health professionals involved with that pupil's care. Heads of House communicate regularly with parents and relevant external agencies to establish what level of work is appropriate in each individual case.



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Where absence does not fall under the two categories listed above, the School will not provide work for the pupil to complete during the period of absence. Pupils will be expected to catch up with work missed.

Where a pupil has a diagnosed medical condition (and the school has been provided with the necessary supporting documentation) that impacts on attendance and punctuality, the School will work closely with parents to ensure that there is minimal impact to their daughter's education. However, it may be necessary from a safeguarding point of view\* to record lates and absences in accordance with the methods and procedures set out in this policy. In these circumstances, the usual sanctions would not apply.

*\*For example to ensure that we have an accurate record of pupils on site in the event of a fire*

In certain circumstances where pupils have missed a significant portion of schooling due to poor health and long-term absence, then that pupil has been advised/asked to repeat the affected school year. For those pupils in examination years, it may be necessary for them to drop a subject(s).

In cases of more prolonged absence the role of the school is usually to reassure families that such absence will not be detrimental to their daughter's progress. The attendance policy should therefore be read with this background in mind and Heads of Houses and the Pastoral Team will use sensitivity in applying it.

### **Registration Procedures during a school closure/lockdown/remote learning**

- **Online Registration for pupils attending remotely**  
An electronic contact list has been set up for each form group within the School. An email should be sent by each form tutor, each morning, to all pupils in their form between 8:00 and 8:15 am to give pupils a longer time to respond by 8:40am. Pupils need to register by 8.45 so that they are ready for lesson 1. Form tutors should then complete their registration for their form on 3Sys in the normal way. Reception will then follow up with phone calls to parents for those pupils who have failed to register.
- **Online registration for vulnerable pupils or children of critical workers attending in school**



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While parents and carers who are critical workers should keep children at home if they can, children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school if required. Schools should speak to parents to identify children of critical workers who need to go to school; those that do not, and are instead accessing remote learning, should be recorded as Code X.

Where parents of critical workers only need their child to attend school part-time, schools should use Code X to record the sessions that the child is not expected to attend

Where the child of a critical worker is expected to attend a session and does not do so, the school should record the absence as Code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable

As usual, Code X should be used if the child is self-isolating or quarantining because of coronavirus (COVID-19).

As vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time, they should not be marked as Code X if they are not in school (except if they are shielding, self-isolating or quarantining). If the parent of a vulnerable child wishes their child to be absent, the parent should let the school know. The Department expects schools to grant applications for leave of absence given the exceptional circumstances. This should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.

Where schools grant a leave of absence to vulnerable children they should still speak to parents and social workers (where applicable) to explore the reasons for this and any concerns raised. The discussions should focus on the welfare of the child and ensuring the child is able to access appropriate education and support while they are at home.

- **Reporting cause for concerns during a School closure**

During a period of remote learning the School will use the pupil concerns spreadsheets to monitor any concerns relating to specific pupils. Respective Heads of Houses will then follow-up with cause for concern pupils following normal School policy and Procedures.