



Attendance Policy

Approved by: C. Stygal

Committee: Chair - R. Turner

Last reviewed: June 2025

Next review due by: June 2026



Attendance Policy

NB: This attendance policy applies to the following borough provisions; Mayesbrook Park Campus, Erkenwald Campus, Seabrook Campus and The Access to Attendance Service. Due regard should also be paid to it by the borough's commissioned provisions under Mayesbrook Park School.

If pupils do not attend, they cannot learn.

90% attendance is equivalent to half a day's absence a week. Over 5 years this amounts to the loss of half a school year.

To achieve their full potential a pupil's average attendance must be above 95%.

Introduction:

At Mayesbrook Park School (MPS) we aim for a positive learning environment across the school and all of our provisions which enables and encourages all pupils to achieve. For pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and punctually. Every pupil on roll in our school and provisions should be on time, every day unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that parents/carers make sure that their child(ren) attends regularly, and this policy sets out how this will be achieved.

It is our policy to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career and establishes a good pattern for later life. Therefore, we actively promote and encourage 100 percent attendance for all our pupils. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

The importance of regular school attendance:

At MPS we do everything possible to facilitate regular school attendance. There are four main reasons for this:

1. All young people aged between 5 and 16 have the right to full time education. School and local education authorities have a duty to ensure that they take up this right.
2. A key factor in raising levels of achievement in our school is establishing a regular pattern of attendance and punctuality. Any absence will affect this pattern of attendance and will thereby seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching patterns so may affect the learning of others in the same class.
3. Positive attitudes towards attendance enables students to maximise their opportunities both at school and in later life.
4. MPS places a high priority on promoting equal access to the curriculum for all students. Irregular attendance may lead to disadvantage and inequality, place students at risk, isolate them from their peers and may result in unsettled behaviour. A child may be at harm if they do not attend school, and safeguarding all students is everyone's responsibility and encompasses attendance, behaviour management, health and safety, access to the curriculum and anti-bullying.

The law relating to safeguarding:



Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-Bullying

Failing to attend on a regular basis must be considered as a significant safeguarding matter.

Promoting regular attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility: pupils, parents/carers, and all members of staff.

To do this the school and provisions will:

- Report to parents/carers at least termly on how their child is performing in school, what their attendance/punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual achievement
- Reward good or improving attendance through competitions, certificates, rewards and outings/events
- Run promotional events when parents/carers, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels

School procedures for improving student attendance and punctuality:

- **Recording and authorising absence**

Any child who is absent from school must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the Head Teacher or designated member(s) of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for absence, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unexplained. If no reason has been provided for this absence within two weeks, it will be marked as unauthorised.

Any student who is absent for more than ten consecutive days without an explanation will be reported to the local authority. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details or what action they have taken to address the absence.

- **Lateness**

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 9:00am. Any student arriving after this time will be marked as late/unexplained absence unless there is an acceptable explanation. In cases, for instance, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. Late detentions are issued daily and all students who arrive late without explanation will be issued a detention. Parents will be notified where possible.

Attendance and Punctuality Ladder

All student's absence/punctuality is monitored in accordance with the school attendance and punctuality ladder.

- **Stage 1 – First day absence**



It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the provision of the reason for a pupil's absence by 9:00am on the day of absence.

All provisions operate a first day calling system and we will endeavour to contact parents/carers on the first day of absence via telephone or text message if we have not previously been contacted.

- **Stage 2 – Third day absence**

If a child has three consecutive days absence and no contact has been made a letter will be sent home requesting immediate contact. A home visit may be conducted by our school home support practitioner and/or the student support team.

- **Stage 3+ - Continued absence**

If a child has five consecutive days absence and no contact has been made a home visit will be conducted by our school home support practitioner and/or the student support team. Following ten days consecutive absence, the local authority will be informed of the pupil's absence. A secondary home visit will be arranged. In the case of long-term illness, the provision should be notified so that teachers can set work. If it is known that the pupil will be absent for more than 2 weeks, other arrangements will be made.

Concern letters are sent home to parents in the first instance (ref: attendance and punctuality ladder). If no improvement is seen parents will be invited to a school attendance consultative group meeting (SACG). This is a formal meeting at which concerns about attendance and punctuality are raised. An improvement timeline is set – usually two weeks. If there is no improvement, our attendance officer may start liaison with the local authority Education Prosecutions team for possible court action. At present the maximum penalty if found guilty is £2,500 and/or up to three months imprisonment.

For students whose attendance/punctuality fails to improve, after the above interventions and support measures have been tried, the ultimate consequences may be one of the following:

- The school/provision may ask that the council issue a penalty notice on its behalf. A penalty notice carries a fine of £80, per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid within 20 days it rises to £160 if the fine is not paid within 21 days per parent, per child. If not paid at all, court action will be initiated.
- The school/provision may ask the council to initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, or even imprisonment.
- In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

The law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that “the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable: - a) to age, ability, and aptitude and

b) to any special educational needs, he/she may have Either
by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Methods of reporting absences:

In any case of absence, parents/carers should contact the school/provision by one of the following methods:

- By phone
- Personal contact at the provision



Mayesbrook Park School also operates a texting service (InTouch). In the event that we are unable to contact you via telephone a text message will be sent. You can reply to this text message to inform us of reasons for absence.

If the parent/carer is unable to contact the provision, a parent/carer note explaining the absence must be brought into the provision on the pupil's first day back.

Authorisation of Pupil Absence

The school/provision will decide whether to authorise a pupil's absence. The following types of absence are usually authorised:

- Genuine illness. Where a pupil is ill for more than 3 consecutive days or where we have concerns about a pupil's intermittent absence for illness parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence in the form of a doctor's note.
- Medical appointments. Parents/carers will be asked to provide proof of these in the form of an appointment card or hospital letter. Where at all possible such appointments should be arranged outside school hours.
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement or marriage of immediate family member
- Seeing a parent/carer who is on leave from the armed forces

All absences must be supported by a parent/carer note or phone call and where appropriate medical evidence.

Unauthorised Absences

The Head of the school will not usually authorise the following absences:

- **Holidays in term time**

Taking holidays in term time affects pupils' schooling as much as any other absence and for this reason the school/provisions do not authorise holidays in term time. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school to go on holiday. Only in exceptional circumstances will leave of absence be granted. In this case the Head of the school will consider carefully any applications made and will notify the parents/carers of the decision. In line with borough recommendations, if a holiday is taken in term time without authorisation, a fixed penalty notice may be issued.

- **Time out of the provision for:** shopping, supporting a parent or sibling at home, a day trip or birthday celebration.

Truancy

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends all lessons as required. Parents/carers will be informed by the school/provision if their child has been identified as truanting from the school/provision. Persistent cases will be explored by the MPS Attendance Officer who may consider legal action.

Whilst any child may be absent because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend the provision. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school/provision, the parents, and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):



A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of the sessions of which they were expected to attend within the school year **for whatever reason** and regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and parents'/carers' full support and cooperation is needed to tackle this. Some pupils in Alternative Provision might already be PA based on their poor attendance in mainstream education.

All absences must be thoroughly monitored and investigated. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils must be tracked and monitored carefully. All PA pupils and their parents/carers are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include allocation of additional support through a mentor or a 14-19 Careers Service Worker, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the MPS School Attendance Officer.

Persistent Absence that falls below 50%

A pupil who has attendance of less than 50% will have a referral completed to children's services for Educational Neglect. The aim of this is to get additional support into the family home and support parents and the young person.

How we monitor and review student attendance and punctuality

At MPS a member of the senior leadership team has responsibility for attendance. The attendance and punctuality of all students is monitored regularly by our pastoral staff. Written attendance reports are submitted to the MPS senior leadership team every half term.

A letter will be sent to the home address of all students regularly, detailing current attendance percentages and details of punctuality.

Duties of the Senior Member of Staff Responsible for the recording and reporting of Attendance Daily:

- Ensure that all registers are taken at the agreed time and that there is sufficient tutor cover available
- Ensure that first day response calls to parents/carers of all absent pupils are made • Register late pupils
- If paper registers are in use, ensure that attendance marks are accurately transferred to SIMS daily **Weekly:**
- Provide a weekly and cumulative attendance return for the Head of MPS/Welfare team • Provide a weekly PA return
- Provide an absence analysis report in order to determine which pupils need follow up
- Meet with parents/carers as required **Monthly:**
- Hold parents/carers meeting for PA pupils **Termly:**
- Provide attendance data for individual pupil reports
- Provide a detailed analysis of attendance and absence patterns for the school/provision's SLT.