

# Attendance Policy

This is a Melland High School Policy

Ratified by Governing Body:

*September 2010  
(amended)*

Reviewed:

*June 2019*

*September 2014*

Next Review Date:

*May 2021*



# Attendance Policy

Melland High School believes 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 are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

## 1. Introduction & Aims

- 1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.
- 1.2 Melland High School values 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.
- 1.3 Melland High School 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 takes into account 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 children of compulsory school age 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 18.
- 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 2006, 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; or
  - unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

## 3. Categorising absence

- 3.1 Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- 3.2 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parent/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.
- 3.3 Parent/carers should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return.



- 3.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:
- 3.5 Illness In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent/carer informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parent/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. 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 should attend school for part of the day. Parent/carers should show the appointment card to school.
- 3.7 Other Authorised Circumstances this relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to **exceptional** circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent/carer in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.
- 3.8 Excluded (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher/form tutor/Head will make arrangements for work to be sent home.
- 3.9 Parent/carers **will not** be granted permission to take their children on holiday during term time following current legislative guidelines. Parent/carers do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday, and this absence will be coded as unauthorised. Parent/carers should be made aware that if their child is absent for **any** of their education during that academic year, due to an unauthorised absence, they will be issued with a penalty notice.
- 3.10 If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parent/carers has not been made or received, school will take necessary steps to investigate and resolve the situation.
- 3.11 Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. All requests for leave must be put in writing to the Principal. Principals should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. This should be no more than ten days.
- 3.12 Religious Observance. Melland High School 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 of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.
- 3.13 It is reasonable for a parent/carer to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent/carer's religious body.
- 3.14 Parent/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent. However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.
- 3.16 Traveller Absence The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.
- 3.17 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.



- 3.18 It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parent/carers of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.
- 3.19 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.
- 3.20 Melland High School 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 Melland High School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.
- 3.21 Melland High School 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
- 3.22 Melland High School will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.
- 3.23 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.
- 3.24 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.
- 3.25 Late Arrival pupils arriving after 9.30am will be marked as present but arriving late in form registration. The register will close at 10am; pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as 'U' unauthorised late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session. On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to reception to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.
- 3.26 The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.
- 3.27 The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.
- 3.28 Unauthorised absence will not be authorised unless parent/carers have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school. Parent/carers will be advised to send their child into school if they do not have supporting medical appointment cards or evidence to support illness.
- 3.29 Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:
- A pupil's/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.
  - Holidays taken during school term time.



- Persistent illness without medical evidence.

#### 4. Deletions from the Register

4.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, 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.
- 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.

4.2 Melland High School will follow Manchester City Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

#### 5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Melland High School 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 will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parent/carers.
- Review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or DfE required and on time.
- The Assistant Principal with the responsibility for Attendance will lead on all attendance issues.
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected & analysed to demonstrate correlations between attendance & attainment.

5.2 The 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 regularly reviewed including a parent/carer consultation forum.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of and implement the Attendance Policy



- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 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 Children, Schools and Families as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance.
- 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.

Department Heads/Pastoral Staff/Form Tutors will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parent/carers/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, 2006 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.

5.4 We request that parent/carers will:

- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school before 9am 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.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- 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 on holiday during term-time, where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Principal in advance of booking the holiday.

## 6. Using Attendance Data

- 6.1 Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.



- 6.2 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.
- 6.3 Melland High School will share attendance data with the DfE as required.
- 6.4 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

## 7. Support Systems

- 7.1 Melland High School 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.
- 7.2 Melland High School 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 looked after children.
- 7.3 Melland High School will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:
  - Discussion with parent/carers/carers and pupils
  - Attendance panels
  - Parent/carer contracts
  - Attendance report cards
  - Referrals to support agencies
  - Learning mentors
  - Pupil Voice Activities
  - PSHE/Citizenship
  - Family learning
  - Reward systems
  - Time limited part time time-tables
  - Additional learning support
  - Behaviour support
  - Reintegration support packages
- 7.4 Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parent/carers and pupils.
- 7.5 Where parent/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the attendance team will consider the use of legal sanctions. This may include a 'fast track to prosecution'.

## 8. Legal Sanctions

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 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.



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

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

8.5 Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

8.6 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.

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

8.8 Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.