Manchester Hospital School

Attendance Policy

Document Control	
Title	Attendance Policy
Policy Number	MHS010
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Purpose of the policy	Set out the expectations and recording processes for managing attendance
Related policies/guidance	• MHS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy • MHS Admissions • MHS Behaviour and Relationships Policy • MCC School Attendance & Exclusions Team Reduced Timetable Guidance. • Working together to improve attendance July 2026
Review	September 2027
Author	Gwen Rees-Moffitt
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Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, Manchester Hospital School has due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it and to foster good relations across all protected characteristics. Manchester Hospital School will consider equality when policies are being developed, adopted and implemented.

Manchester Hospital School serves the needs of a very large and diverse range of children, young

people and their families at times when they are extremely vulnerable. Our core purpose as a school is to uphold the child's right to Education and our policies and procedures are necessary to keep staff and children safe. We acknowledge that our pupils are often living with a range of very complex medical conditions, including mental ill health, and therefore we keep the needs of the pupil at the heart of all decisions. We will, therefore, work within the parameters of all statutory policies whilst seeking to understand and support the child's long-term education and health needs.

1. Introduction

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

1.2 MHS 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 can realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. However, we know that as all of our pupils have medical or mental health needs (or both), they have times when they are not well enough to attend school.

1.3 MHS 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 support they need to improve their attendance over time.

1.4 MHS 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 child protection and safeguarding, admissions, anti-bullying, and behaviour. This policy takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

1.5 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, 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

2.1 This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance 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 2026
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Safeguarding

3.1 Every pupil should be able to 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.

3.2 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.

3.3. 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 support, protecting children from abuse and neglect, online safety,

radicalisation and extremism, FGM and CSE.

3.4 More information on safeguarding and the protection of children can be found in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

3.5 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 one other contact number in case of emergency.

3.6 It is also important for parents and carers to regularly inform the school of any changes or any additional and specific vulnerability in relation to their child or home circumstances.

3.7 At least annually, we will actively request that parents and carers check and confirm the contact details we have on record so that children can be supported to attend school and that we hold current contact details.

4. Categorising absence

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

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

4.3 Because our pupils are all vulnerable, parents and carers must advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. Verbal explanations are acceptable where this is considered appropriate.

4.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:

4.4.1 Illness Parents and carers may be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the head teacher to authorise absence where appropriate. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

4.4.2 Routine CAMHS/Medical/Dental Appointments Many of our children and young people have regular medical appointments. Parents and carers are advised, where possible, to make CAMHS, medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should return to school after their appointment or attend school for part of the day before it takes place. For pupils being taught in the home or virtually, we ask parents to avoid making an appointment at the time of their lesson.

4.4.3 Other Authorised Circumstances This relates to where there is cause for absence due to

exceptional circumstances.

4.4.4 Excluded (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's site lead will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

4.4.5 Religious Observance MHS acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends. If parents/carers wish for their child to miss school due to religious observance, they should make a written request to the headteacher.

4.4.6 Study Leave Study leave may be granted for Year 11 pupils approaching GCSE examinations if this is appropriate.

4.4.7 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.

4.4.8 Late Arrival For our Leo Kelly site, the register closes at 9:30am. For virtual lessons, teachers make contact with the family if the child is 5 minutes late for their online lesson. The register closes for these pupils if they are 15 minutes late and no communication can be made with the family.

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

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

4.5.1 If a pupil fails to return 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.

4.5.2 If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school, the absence will be unauthorised.

4.5.3 See appendix 1 for the full list of DfE attendance codes - as per Working Together to improve Attendance 2026

Children Missing from Education - MHS will follow Manchester City Council's Children Missing in Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

MHS will inform the relevant local authorities when a pupil is identified as not being on the roll of a school.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The governing body

The governing body 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 pupils who are not hospital inpatients.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The monitoring of pupil attendance is undertaken by the safeguarding governor and reported through the Curriculum committee and FGB.

6.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

6.3 The designated Senior Leader responsible for School Attendance is responsible for:

- Offering a vision for attendance for Manchester Hospital School
- Monitoring attendance data
- Monitoring interventions to improve attendance
- Monitoring whole school and school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

The Site Leads for Leo Kelly School and hospital sites will be responsible for (as appropriate):

- Leading attendance across their school sites
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement at their school site
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes at their school
- Having an oversight of data analysis at their school
- 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 at their school
- Ensuring the processes for following up absence or lateness are adhered to by all staff at their school

6.4 The Business team undertake the following roles relating to attendance

- Being the initial point of contact for families to report absence
- Providing the site lead with key information at a set point every day so that responses are timely and ensure pupils are safe
- Providing regular attendance reports to school leaders and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher

6.5 Teachers and designated TAs

Teachers and designated TAs are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, at the time of the lesson using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on Arbor.

6.5 The Business team

The Business team will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the site lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

6.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day/timetabled session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence on the day of first the absence and 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

6.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

· Attend school when they are well enough to do so

7. Using Attendance Data

7.1 The school will:

- Report on attendance and absence data half-termly, termly, and yearly.
- Monitor attendance at an individual pupil level for those attending our day school - Leo Kelly School and being taught in their home or in the community.
- Identify whether there are groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. 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 body.

7.2 Analysing attendance

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

At MHS, all pupils are unwell. For this reason, our attendance analysis includes both statutory

attendance data and planned attendance data. A number of pupils at MHS have time-limited part-time attendance in order to facilitate their medical treatment and/or their reintegration to a full-time education and in order to meet their individual needs. Therefore, a pupil may have a low statutory attendance (they may only attend mornings as part of their reintegration to full-time education), however, they may attend 100% of the sessions required on their reduced timetable. For that reason, we monitor and analyse 'MHS' attendance' as well as statutory attendance data. 'MHS attendance' is the total number of present marks out of the total number of possible attendance marks (as a percentage) for sessions on their multi-agency-agreed timetable. Using both measures enables a deeper understanding of the attendance patterns across the school and for individual pupils.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to 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

7.4 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. Many of our pupils fall into these categories.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- 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
- Never accept 'no reason' given for non-attendance. Every absence will be chased up speedily.

8. Support Systems

8.1 At our school we recognise 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 most appropriate support and to accept the support that is offered or advised.

8.2 MHS also recognise that our pupils are those who require additional support to attain good attendance; they all have special educational needs, some have physical or mental health needs and some of our pupils may also be migrant/refugee pupils and/or children looked after by the local authority.

8.3 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance for all pupils. Strategies used will include:

- Escalation of attendance approach
- Referrals to supporting agencies such as Family Help
- Pupil Voice Activities
- Home visits
- EBSA materials
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Time limited reduced time-tables
- Reintegration support packages
- Change of curriculum pathway
- Use of Remedi mentor

8.4 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, MHS will work closely with the home school who may consider the use of legal sanctions and escalate to CSC. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

At Manchester Hospital School, all pupils have ill-health, so parents/carers may have reasonable justification if their child has persistent non-attendance. This, in turn, means that we would not, as a rule, pursue local authority prosecution or fines. Instead, we use a range of approaches designed to support re-engagement with education as outlined in 8.3 and 8.5.

8.5 Use of reduced timetables

In order to support our pupils to access full-time education successfully, a number of our pupils have a temporary reduced timetable. These are created for pupils when medical needs prevent the pupil from attending full-time and a re-integration package is required to make progress towards full-time attendance.

All reduced timetables will be:

- Temporary with agreed dates for review
- Reviewed every 4 weeks
- Only extended when the medical needs of the pupil require extension
- Agreed with parents and home schools

The site lead for Leo Kelly school conducts placement reviews every 4 weeks. The reviews include views from key staff from the pupil's home school, pupil / parent voice and the views of health in order to make informed decisions on any changes to the pupil's timetable. The aim of these meetings is to ensure that the pupil has an appropriate timetable for their individual needs and every effort is made to increase the pupil's contact time with school.

The reduced timetable does not prevent any pupil from attending school on a full-time basis as soon as they are able to do so.

Appendix 1
List of all attendance codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending at a place other than at school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registration	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – approved leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of

		the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: - In police detention - Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or - Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes (must be cleared at least weekly)
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: Traveller Family Absence

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1996, section 444(6), states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues two hundred attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in the year preceding the absence. This applies only when the family proves it is engaged in a trade or business that requires it to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

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.

MHS 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 MHS will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

MHS can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and

inform the school regarding proposed return dates

MHS will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling for work or trade purposes and has given indication that they intend to return.

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

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.