

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2021-22



## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Policy Authors: H McClurg & H Thornton

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Our mission is to challenge students and staff alike to achieve their full potential as lifelong learners within a changing world. We strive continuously for excellence in all that we do.

### Introduction

Morecambe Bay Academy recognises the clear link between the attendance and attainment of students. The aim of this policy, is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality for students within Morecambe Bay Academy to support learning and achievement. The importance of attendance and punctuality is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues. It is important to see our young people every day and provide an educationally safe and secure environment.

School attendance and punctuality 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. To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all students attend regularly and on time. Students should aim to attend every day that The School is open setting a challenging target for all students to aim for 100% attendance and the expectation for all students to achieve at least 97%. Morecambe Bay Academy believes Teachers, Parents, Carers, Students and all members of Morecambe Bay Academy community have an important contribution in improving attendance and punctuality ensuring students attend to achieve.

### Legal Framework

Regular and punctual school attendance is subject to education laws and this policy is written within that context Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents 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 of 4 A child is of Compulsory School Age at the

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beginning of the term following their 5th 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 16. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, 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. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present
- absent
- present at approved educational activity

or

- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This Policy sets out how we will achieve this together and should be read in conjunction with the Attendance Roles and Responsibilities Guidance attached to this document.

### Aims

- Maximise the overall percentage of student attendance and punctuality at Morecambe Bay Academy.
- Reduce the number of students who are persistently absent and raise the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the academy community.
- Provide support advice and guidance for parents, students and staff.
- Develop and monitor clear procedures for the maintenance of accurate registration for students.
- Ensure a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data.
- Ensure a whole school approach to ensure consistency of intervention strategies.
- Continue to promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority, Children's Services, Health and other agencies.

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### Promoting regular Attendance at Morecambe Bay Academy

This is everyone's responsibility, all members of staff, parent/carers and students themselves. To help us all focus on this, Morecambe Bay Academy will ensure:

- Appropriate interventions are in place to deter poor punctuality.
- An appropriate curriculum is essential and will be reviewed regularly.
- The need for high quality teaching and learning throughout the academy is recognised as being essential to the promotion of attendance.
- Students are provided with appropriate support to minimise disaffection with school. This includes Morecambe Bay Academy and multi-agency provision as appropriate.
- Special Educational Needs, Disadvantaged and Looked After students and other vulnerable groups are given appropriate support, and attendance is monitored rigorously.
- Effective partnerships with parent/carers are encouraged through regular contact and support provided.
- Parents/carers are kept informed of students' attendance and punctuality through first day contact, termly progress reports, individual letters and meetings when required.
- Good attendance and punctuality is rewarded through regular individual student incentives.
- Attendance and punctuality is regularly discussed with students in form time and at assemblies.

Staff members' attendance roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all staff should ensure these are followed.

The academy will use a range of strategies to promote student attendance. The range of rewards and sanctions will include:

- Regular rewards and recognition for 100% or improved attendance
- Tutor attendance discussions
- Attendance report
- Parental Meeting
- Attendance Action Plans
- Written warnings
- Penalty Notice
- Prosecution

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### Tutor attendance discussions

Each week student attendance will be reviewed using the academy's attendance tracker. Where a student's attendance shows a decline, the Form Tutor will hold an informal conversation with the student and explain the importance of good attendance (97% and above) and the impact of poor attendance.

### Attendance report: attendance of between 92–95%

Where a student shows no sign of improvement in their attendance, they may be placed on a 2 week attendance report. This will be completed each morning by the tutor and their attendance logged. A reward will be offered to students at the end of the two week period where there is consistent improvement. If a student receives an unauthorised absence during this two week period a parental meeting will be arranged with the school.

### Parental Meetings: attendance of between 90–92%

Parental meetings will be arranged with the Pastoral Coordinators and parents of the students who either have been given an unauthorised absence during their two weeks' attendance report; or who show a rapid decline in attendance; or whose absence patterns

shown concern to the school; or who are at risk of becoming a persistent absentee. Agreed targets will be set in this meeting and a follow up phone call will take place within an agreed period of time.

### Attendance Action Plan

Following a parental meeting all parties will sign an agreed action plan for improving attendance. This plan will last for four weeks and be reviewed each week by Year Leader, students and parent/carer.

### Written Warnings: below 90%

Where a student's attendance shows concern or falls below national average, parents will receive a written warning, which will outline the attendance concern and potential next steps. Up to four letters will be sent, depending on the student's attendance percentage and level of intervention already received.

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## Penalty Notice

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil's attendance has fallen below 95% and they are absent from the school for a period of leave of absence and the absence has not been previously authorised by the Principal
- A pupil's attendance has fallen below 95% and they have accumulated at least five sessions of unauthorized absence and further unauthorized absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

Morecambe Bay Academy recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home or at school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance or behaviour in school. For example: bereavement, divorce, separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the academy identify any additional support that may be required. Morecambe Bay Academy also recognises that some students will require additional support to gain good attendance.

Children missing in Education:

The academy will notify Lancashire's Children Missing in Education Team when pupils have missed ten consecutive days of school without permission, (or sooner if they are made aware a child is not going to return, e.g. to be moved out of area.

The academy will complete aCME9 removal from roll form and or provide Lancashire ([offroll@Lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:offroll@Lancashire.gov.uk)) with the relevant details where a pupil has been removed off roll

and a start at a new school has been confirmed or where the CME Team has advised the academy that removal from roll is authorised.

## Attendance Expectations and Absence Procedures

### Expectations of students

- Ensure you arrive at Morecambe Bay Academy by 8.55am with correct Uniform and equipment to start the day.
- Be in your form room by 8.55am.
- Always use the signing in/out system when late or leaving Morecambe Bay Academy for appointments.
- Following any absence complete any missed work that has been provided by Morecambe Bay Academy

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### Expectations of Parent/Carer

- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment: encourage their child to look to the future and aspire
- Ensure son/daughter leaves for school on time.
- Ensure son/daughter is properly equipped, prepare bags the night before.
- Telephone Morecambe Bay Academy if your son/daughter is going to be late.
- If a routine non-emergency appointment is necessary, please ensure medical and dental appointments are made outside academy hours, where possible.
- Contact the academy preferably by 8.45am on the first day of absence if your child is unable to attend through illness, giving an indication of the expected duration of the illness.
- Morecambe Bay Academy can be contacted by Phone: 0152410207
- If a text message is received as a result of your son/daughters absence it is important that you respond to this text to ensure your child is appropriately safeguarded.
- Contact your child's year leader if the reason for absence requires a more personal contact.

### Authorised Absence

This is when the academy has given approval for absence in advance or where the explanation is given afterwards and has been accepted as a satisfactory cause for the absence.

Parents and carers should contact the academy by phone (01524) 410207 on the first day before 9:00am. This should be followed up by a note on the child's return.

### Absence may be authorised for

- Illness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement
- Religious observance
- Study Leaven

### Requests for leave of absence

Requests for exceptional circumstances leave of absence must be in writing to the Principal and can only be authorised by the Principal and if possible at least 4 weeks prior to any leave. Parents are strongly discouraged from taking their children on holiday during term time. All requests will be denied unless exceptional circumstances are presented and this is at the discretion of The Principal.

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Morecambe Bay Academy acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends. Consideration will be given to authorising absence or special leave for religious observance. Parent/carer are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent for this reason.

### 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. 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 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in the year preceding the absence. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires it to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. Manchester Academy 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/carer must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

### Unacceptable reasons for missing education

- General holidays
- Shopping
- Concerts
- Birthdays.

Absence Forms can be requested from Student Services and Reception.

### Procedures for absence

If a student is absent we will

- Telephone and text Parent/Carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 9.00am. (Priority will be given to the vulnerable list)
- If no response is received or the school is unable to contact the parent/carer of a vulnerable student after the first day of absence either by telephone or text then a home visit would be carried out that same day
- If no response is received after three days unauthorised absence, a member of staff will home visit
- After the third day school attendance procedures, as outlined earlier in this policy, will be followed.



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### Persistent Absence

Students are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DFE) if their attendance falls below 90%. This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DFE expects Schools to intervene well before students reach a level of persistent absence.

Whilst we understand that students can be absent from Morecambe Bay Academy because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a student is reluctant to attend, or a parent/carer has concerns, it is advised that parents/carers should not cover up their absences as illness or give in to pressure and excuse them from attending as this can make the situation worse.

Parent/Carers are asked to contact the Attendance Leads in the first instance or Year Leader if they have pastoral concerns that they wish to raise.

### Lateness

- Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day they can miss work and late arriving students disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the student arriving late and can encourage future absence.
- A hierarchy of sanctions apply to students who arrive late.
- How we manage lateness
- Lateness to school without a valid and exceptional reason will not be tolerated. Any student arriving after 8:55am will be met at the front gates and be issued with a late slip. Where necessary students will receive a same day pastoral detention. Explanations of lateness will be dealt with on a case by case situation.
- Repeated lateness will be reported to parents and carers.

### Attendance and Punctuality Roles and Responsibilities Guidance: Whole School Practice

#### Form Tutors

- Form Tutors should form good relationships with students and parents and actively promote good attendance and punctuality
- Set an example by arriving on time to register students by 8.50am
- Registers are completed on Synergy each day on time (within 5 minutes)
- Ensure attendance has a high profile in Tutor Group
- Form tutors to communicate trends in individual attendance to students in the form on a weekly basis.
- Discuss absence with students returning to school.
- Welcoming long-term absentees back into the Tutor Group
- Discuss any concerns relating to a student absence with the Year Leader initiating follow up procedures.



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### Subject Teachers

- Ensure that registers are completed on Synergy each day on time (within 5 minutes of the start of the lesson)
- When completing register teachers should check previous lesson /session for any potential missing students. If a student is in the previous lesson but not in the next, refer to Year Leader via email straight away to support follow up interventions.
- If a student arrives at the lesson late the mark must be amended using the L code to record the late arrival.

### Attendance Leaders

- Ensuring staff have completed AM/PM registers
- Ensuring input of accurate attendance marks in the register via Synergy
- Identify students who are absent from school without reason (Period 1)
- Log on SIMS, parental voicemails, text messages and emails regarding student absences
- Ensure all Late arriving students are spoken to and their attendance is entered onto the system
- Synergy in touch messages sent to parent/carers who have failed to contact regarding their child's absence and also students who arrive late.
- First day absence phone contact with parents/carers, following up unexplained absences where no text message has been returned.
- SLT and Form Tutors and Teachers contacted with specific attendance queries and necessary follow ups required
- Supporting staff with registration queries, support the interventions of the Form Tutors
- Logging attendance of all students going out /in school for medical, dental or visits
- Daily liaison with alternative curriculum providers for students off site to ensure AM and PM registers are provided within set time parameters and students who fail to attend with reasons unknown are followed up through the First Day contact systems.
- Daily Late process, Log and send actions for Pastoral Leaders and Assistant Principal.

### Assistant Principals

- To lead on whole school attendance and directly line manage Attendance Managers and AIMS.
- Weekly meetings with Attendance Managers to QA daily/weekly actions
- Meet fortnightly with Vice Principal to discuss most vulnerable students,(this is a triangulation meeting between, attendance, pastoral and safeguarding.
- Present attendance data to SLT and governors when requested.
- Continually review absence procedures.

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### Vice Principal

- Meet weekly with fortnightly with Assistant Principal and pastoral team to quality assure attendance and actions.
- Review and monitor the impact of interventions and coordinate strategies to improve attendance
- Have full knowledge of all complex cases
- Support Assistant Principal in presenting the data to all relevant stakeholders.

### Principal

- To make judgements on holiday/special leave of absence requests
- To meet fortnightly with Vice Principal and Pastoral Team to have robust discussions on school attendance

### SLT

- To be aware of those on the vulnerable list when on call
- Ensure that pupils make move quickly between lessons to prevent lateness
- Discuss attendance at readmission meetings and set appropriate targets for attendance.

Reviewed September 2021

Date of Next Review: September 2022