



Marlborough Road Academy

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

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## Introduction

Here at Marlborough Road, we believe it is of vital importance that our students have good attendance at school. This is a successful Academy and all students play their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to be proud to belong and to achieve of their best. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at Marlborough Road, on time, every day the Academy is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly, and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Regular attendance at school is of critical importance to a child's education. Evidence tells us that the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment<sup>1</sup>. Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts the learning of others in the same teaching groups by disrupting classroom routines. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at Marlborough Road is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from Marlborough Road without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## Aims

An effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities. To ensure all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand these expectations, and how they apply at Marlborough Road this policy sets out:

- Section 1: the practical procedures to be followed at Marlborough Road in relation to attendance
- Section 2: the measures in place at Marlborough Road to promote regular attendance by its registered pupils
- Section 3: the responsibilities of particular members of staff in relation to attendance
- Section 4: the action to be taken by staff if a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly

## Section 1: Practical Procedures

This section sets out the practical procedures to be followed at Marlborough Road in relation to attendance are as follows:

- The attendance and punctuality expectations of pupils and parents, including start and close of the day, register closing times and the processes for requesting leaves of absence and informing the school of the reason for an unexpected absence.
- Information and contact details of the school staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis (such as a class teacher, attendance officer, admin team etc) and for more detailed support on attendance (such as pastoral lead or family liaison officer etc).
- The school's day to day processes for managing attendance, for example first day calling and processes to follow up on unexplained absence.

## The Admissions Register (or "school roll")

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<sup>1</sup> [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

1. As a school, we are responsible for keeping the Admissions Register up to date. This contains specific personal details of every pupil along with the date of admission or readmission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the last school attended.
2. We also hold emergency contact numbers for each pupil. It is our policy to hold more than one such number, so that we have options to make contact with a responsible adult should the need arise.
3. A pupil's name can only be lawfully deleted from the admissions register in very limited circumstances.

### **The Attendance Register**

4. The register will be taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion, the school will record whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
5. These records will be kept electronically to ensure accuracy and the timely sharing and analysis of information – all of which is critical to ensure good attendance.

### **Punctuality and Regular Attendance**

6. The School day starts at 8.50am and finishes at 3.20pm.

### **Lateness**

7. Registration begins ten minutes after the child's start time. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. Register will close at half an hour after the child's start time. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.
8. On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office and sign in to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.
9. The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.
10. 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.

### **Absence**

11. Parents<sup>2</sup> must contact the school when their child is absent to explain that absence. This can be done as follows - phone number 0161 537 1111 giving the following details:
  - full name of pupil;
  - pupil's Year group;
  - Full name of person reporting absence and relation to child;
  - Reason for absence.
12. Where a reason for the absence is not received by 9.30am on the day of the absence, the school will within 30 minutes contact the parents on the same day to understand the reason for the absence.

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout this document, the terms 'parent' and 'parents' are interchangeable and apply equally to 'parents and carers' and includes foster parents and social workers where relevant.

13. Where further unexplained absences occur, the school will make further contact with the parent (including foster parents and/ or social workers where appropriate). This should be with the aim of understanding **why** the absence has occurred, and **when** the pupil will return.
14. The correct absence code will be inputted into the Attendance Register as soon as the reason is ascertained.
15. Granting a leave of absence will only be made in exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted it is for the Headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. It is extremely unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. To request a leave of absence please contact the school office.

## **Section 2: Promoting Regular Attendance**

This section sets out the measures in place at Marlborough Road to **promote** regular attendance by its registered pupils.

Marlborough Road Academy is committed to providing all of our pupils with a suitable and effective education in a safe, supportive and happy environment. We are an inclusive school working in partnership with parents and carers to achieve good attendance and punctuality enabling pupils to achieve their full potential.

Marlborough Road Academy believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, 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 parents
- Annually 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

- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school
- 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 Department of Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior member of staff to lead on attendance
- 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

**The Leadership Team will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
  - Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
  - 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 reviewed annually
  - Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
  - Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
  - Ensure that there is a named senior member of staff 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

**Class teachers will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- 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.
- 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

**Parents will:**

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have high aspirations
- Contact the school 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
- Not take their child on holiday during term-time.

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 or it is requested

Every term, teachers will report to parents on their child's attendance. This can be accessed from each child's profile page on Arbor. Reports are in the form of interim reports for Parent's Evening and the annual school report.

Teachers will share the attendance diamond with parents to illustrate the degree of concern around levels of attendance

- pupils with attendance between 100% and 96%
- pupils with attendance between 95% and 91%
- pupils with attendance below 90% (Persistent Absentee)

The Attendance Manager and Principal have access to a complete set of data

Data set is analysed half termly and included in the Principal's report to Governors.

Every week, the attendance lead provides the Principal with data from the beginning of the school year and from the preceding week.

This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 1). Pupils identified as a cause for concern receive intervention from Key Workers and the DSL/Attendance officer.

A series of escalating letters are sent to parents and those whose attendance does not improve are called to panel with the Principal and the linked Governor and then with the EWO. Fines may be issued.

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment. It is triangulated weekly with information around pupil behaviour, attainment and safeguarding.

Marlborough Road Academy will share attendance data with the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the local authority as required.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998

The school's strategy for **reducing persistent and severe absence**, include

- The attendance officer in school making contact you on the first day of absence.
- Prolonged, frequent or odd day absences will lead to the school referring your child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). The EWO will then invite you to a panel meeting to discuss your child's absence.
- The EWO will offer to assist you with any difficulties you may be experiencing regarding your child's attendance.
- If we are concerned about the amount of time your child is absent through illness, we will refer you to the School Health Advisor.
- Parents who co-operate fully to improve their child's attendance are less likely to receive a penalty notice\* or face further court action.

The point at which **Fixed Penalty Notices** for absence and other sanctions will be sought if support is not appropriate (e.g. for an unauthorised holiday in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.

Marlborough Road Academy is required to notify the Local Education Authority of any pupil who has recorded more than 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a single academic year. The Local Authority can issue Fixed Penalty Notices under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act in cases where parents do not take responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance at the Academy. An accumulation of 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence places families at risk of this penalty.

The Penalty Notice fine is £60.00 and is per child and per parent. If the fine is not paid within 21 calendar days of issue, it will be increased to £120.00. If the penalty is still not paid within 28 days you will be prosecuted under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. You will be prosecuted for failing to ensure that your child(ren) attend(s) school on a regular basis, i.e. not for the non payment of the penalty.

For continued non payment you could be subject to a fine of up to £2,500.

### **Promoting and incentivising**

16. The School will:

- a) Treat all pupils and parents with dignity. Our staff will always seek to model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.
- b) Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.
- c) Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- d) Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- e) Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority.

- f) Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

### **Data Strategy**

17. The School understands that as poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early detection is crucial. We will therefore undertake regular data analysis to:
- both identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils and/ or pupil cohorts that need it;
  - look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them.
18. The School will typically carry out the following analysis:
- a) Monitoring and analysing weekly attendance (including punctuality) patterns and trends, including whether there are particular issues for some children on certain days;
  - b) Patterns of attendance within sessions, to ensure that all pupils are attending all lessons
  - c) Half-termly, termly and full-year data analysis of patterns and trends, including analysis of pupils and cohorts, identifying patterns in use of certain codes, days where attendance is typically poor and (where appropriate) subjects with low lesson attendance
  - d) Benchmarking attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against Trust-level, local, regional and national data.
19. We will use this analysis to identify pupils who need support so that we can focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those students and to identify any common themes to support improvement planning. We will use the data to inform us regarding the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented, to evaluate approaches or inform action. We will also provide regular attendance reports to class teachers or tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and to school leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).

### **Absence reduction strategy**

20. We will devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include pupils in a year group with higher-than-average absence or for specific groups of students.
21. Data and reports will be shared with the Local Governing Body.
22. As part of promoting regular attendance the school will consider the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (see paragraph 30).

### **Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities**

23. The School recognises that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as they are for any other pupil.
24. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This will include:

- a) Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed.
  - b) Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
  - c) Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed. In addition, the school will work with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day. Please see the School's SEN policy for further details on SEN support.
  - d) Establishing strategies for removing the in-school barriers pupils may face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
  - e) Ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance, recognising that such arrangements can be for a limited time only.
  - f) Ensuring data is regularly monitored for these groups including at board and governing body meetings and in Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary.
25. Pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education. Please see the School's policy on supporting pupils with medical conditions at school for further information.
26. In all cases, the school will be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents; and talk to pupils and parents and understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs.

### **Part-time timetables**

27. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. Please note that a part-time cannot be used as a reasonable adjustment for SEND, unless this is on a temporary basis and as advised by an external agency e.g., Educational Psychologist.
28. A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. Formal arrangements will also be put in place for regularly reviewing it (minimum monthly) with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore will treat such absence as authorised. We will of course consider how best to support learning when a child is working on a part time timetable.

### **Section 3: Particular Responsibilities**

**This section outlines responsibilities of particular members of staff in relation to attendance.**

- The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school are Hayley O’Neill. Contactable via the school office or via email [Hayley.ONeill@marlboroughroad.org](mailto:Hayley.ONeill@marlboroughroad.org)
- Responsibility for identifying unexplained absences on “day 1” will fall to Hayley O’Neill
- Responsibility for identifying further unexplained absences will fall to Hayley O’Neill
- Information and contact details of the school staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis are the school office on 0161 537 111
- More detailed support on attendance can be requested from the school office or Hayley O’Neill

### **Section 4: Specific Action for Failure to Attend Regularly**

**This section sets out the action to be taken by staff if a registered pupil fails to attend the school regularly.**

29. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the best placed person in the school works with and supports the family. Wherever possible, we will keep this person consistent.
30. Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic the school will draw on these relationships and listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing. In doing so, the school will take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support.
31. In the first instance, the school will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.
32. Where barriers are outside of the school’s control, we endeavour to work together with all partners to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need. As a minimum, this will include meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school, agreeing actions or interventions to address them and keeping those actions under regular review in discussion with pupils and families. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. Where absence intensifies, so will the support provided, which will require us to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners, as follows:
  - If the needs and barriers are individual to the pupil this may include provision of mentoring, careers advice, college placements, 1-2-1 tuition or out of hours learning, or where appropriate an education, health and care plan or alternative provision.
  - Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment.
  - Where engagement in support is proving challenging, the school will hold more formal conversations with the parents (and pupil where they are old enough to understand). This is likely to be led by the senior leader responsible for attendance and may include the school’s point of contact in the local authority School Attendance Support Team. The aim of these meetings will be to clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future, but

will also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.

- Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with the school will work with the local authority to:
  - Put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order.
  - Intensify support through statutory children’s social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
  - Issue a fixed penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents’ behaviour.
  - Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.

33. In all cases, the school will monitor the impact of any intervention(s) and make adjustments where necessary in discussion with the pupil, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family. Where interventions are failing, the school will work together with all parties to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach.

**Local Governing Body (LGB) Responsibilities:**

34. The LGB recognises the importance of school attendance and will:

- promote it across the school’s ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

35. The LGB will also ensure:

- that the attendance policy and its contents are generally made known within the school and to parents of registered pupils at the school, and
- that steps are taken at least once in every school year to bring the attendance policy to the attention of all those parents and pupils and all persons who work at the school (whether or not for payment).

Approved by Local Governing Body on Date .....

Implementation Date .....

Review Date.....