



MARSHLAND HIGH SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by: Local Governing Body

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1. Aims

Marshland High School under the West Norfolk Academies Trust is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all students and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We have developed this Policy in order to give a consistent response to all students and families in our care.

We want to do our best for all our children and believe that regular attendance at school is vital for children as it promotes learning, positive attitudes and maintains continuity in their education and in their friendships. It enables children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and encourages them to be responsible, organised and motivated adults. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by a parent.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. We will work with families to identify the reasons for issues within attendance and try to help resolve any difficulties.

Attendance is central to our whole school ethos, vision and values.

Improving attendance is everyone's business. Our staff will form positive relationships with students and parents. All staff will contribute to a whole school approach to attendance which reinforces good school attendance, with positive teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and achieve.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

This policy contains the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets. 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, prevention of bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning.

Good attendance is a learned behaviour and we will ensure that individuals' attendance data and patterns are analysed to ensure learning interventions take place in a timely fashion.

2. Legislation and Guidance

"The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of the parent to make sure that their child received that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at a school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission of an absence in advance from school."

Working together to improve school attendance, May 2022 (Section 1, points 9 and 10)

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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 \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Throughout this policy, 'parent' refers to anyone with parental responsibility.

3. Key Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance: Mr T Duce - t.duce@marshlandhigh.co.uk

Attendance Officer: Miss M Chandler - m.chandler@marshlandhigh.co.uk

At Marshland High School we believe that attendance is a responsibility shared by school staff, governors, parents, students and the wider school community.

The Local Governing Body will:

- Promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review and challenge attendance data at Local Governing Body Meetings
- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school, including cohort groups and vulnerable groups
- Ensure staff receive adequate training on attendance

- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Appoint a link governor, who will monitor attendance, and report back to the school's link Trustee.

The Headteacher will:

- Be responsible for the implementation of this policy
- Monitor the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Make decisions on the authorisation of term time leaves of absences (or delegate this to an appropriate senior leader)
- Make decisions on the referral to the Local Authority for FPN and Fast Track (or delegate this to an appropriate senior leader)

The Designated Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance will:

- Lead on attendance through the school
- Monitor and analyse attendance data, including groups of students such as Pupil Premium, SEND and LAC
- Implement and evaluate the attendance strategy
- Analyse the current strategies and evaluate their impact
- Lead on Fast Track meetings
- Communicate regularly to parents about student attendance

The Attendance Officer:

With overall operational responsibility for attendance in school, they will:

- Monitor and analyse attendance data
- Take absence calls, emails and texts and amend SIMs with the reasons for absence
- Complete first day calls/contact
- Provide regular attendance and punctuality reports for relevant staff
- Work with the wider pastoral team to support good attendance and punctuality
- Issue letters to parents to inform them about attendance rewards and issues
- Monitor the attendance of students in alternative provision
- Identify, arrange and support attendance meetings
- Identify, initiate and arrange Fast Track meetings
- Identify, initiate and refer to Norfolk County Council those who meet the criteria for additional support/interventions, including Fixed Penalty Notices
- Liaise with internal and external agencies to support good attendance in school
- Identify barriers to attendance and support families in breaking down these barriers
- Build positive relationships with hard to reach families
- Report students with unexplained absences, which exceed 10 days, to the CME team
- Refer to the DSL any attendance concerns that may constitute a safeguarding issue

Pastoral Managers:

- Are responsible for working with the Attendance Officer and Deputy Headteacher to reduce absence and PA by monitoring data for their year group and implementing effective interventions.

- Will use weekly attendance reports and SIMs to monitor year group and target individuals' attendance, supporting the Attendance Officer in implementing interventions to improve attendance
- Will use weekly lesson attendance reports and SIMs to monitor punctuality to lessons, identify patterns and address these with relevant staff and students – including issuing detentions or creating a support plan as needed
- Will use their knowledge of students and their families to support the Attendance Officer in addressing concerns regarding attendance and together arrive at the most suitable intervention support to reduce absence
- Attend attendance concern meetings with the Attendance Officer, students and parents
- Provide their AHT with attendance and punctuality updates for their year group

Form Tutors will:

- Accurately record attendance for morning registration within the first 10 minutes of the session
- Support any student who has been absent by welcoming them back into school and offering guidance for catching up with work
- Phone parents at the end of the day for any student who has been absent that day.
- Liaise with the attendance officer and the pastoral team with any attendance concerns
- Record on the SIMS Contact Log, any contact made with parents regarding attendance
- Record and report any safeguarding concerns as a result of attendance conversations with parents on CPOMS

Reception Team will:

- Log the students who arrive late to school, but before 9:20 as L on SIMS.
- Register the students who arrive late to school after 9:20am (after Registration has closed), including the time of arrival:
 - as U on SIMS if no adequate reason is given
 - coded according to the reason provided, along with evidence (e.g. medical appointment card, M)

All Teaching Staff and Support Staff will:

- Complete registers within the first 10 minutes of every lesson
- Will call for a Pastoral Manager to investigate, if a student does not arrive to a lesson but has been marked present previously that day
- Promote the importance of school attendance and punctuality
- Support any student who has been absent, allowing them to catch up on any missed learning
- Support with breaking down the barriers to poor attendance
- Challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like

Parents:

Are responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance and punctuality at school by making sure they:

- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Comply with the Marshland High School Home-School Agreement

- Take an interest in their child's education, asking about schoolwork and encouraging them to get involved in school activities
- Discuss any problems their child may have at school and inform the Tutor/Pastoral Manager about any concerns
- Do not let their child take time off school for minor ailments which would not prevent the student from coming to school
- Arrange appointments and outings outside of school hours (i.e. after school, at the weekend or during school holidays) to help prevent disruption to their child's education
- Do not take holidays during term time
- Notify the school on each day of absence (unless a medical note has been provided in advance which details how many days their child will need to be absent for)
- Seek medical evidence when a health condition is likely to negatively impact on attendance so that appropriate support can be put in place and communicate this with the school
- Make every effort to support their child in building resilience and leading a healthy lifestyle
- Ensure their child is organised and has good routines at home, including sleep routines, so that they arrive punctually to school each day
- Ensure that their child arrives to school on time, especially if driving them to school (to be on the premises by 08:40)

Students will:

- Attend school everyday
- Arrive at school before 08:40
- Inform their tutor/pastoral team if they have any worries or concerns about coming into school

4. Recording Attendance

Students must arrive in school by 08:40 on each school day.

The register for the first (morning) session will be taken at 08:50 and will be kept open until 09:20 (this is 30 minutes after the registration opened)

The register for the second (afternoon) session will be taken at 14:15 and will be kept open until 14:45

See appendix 1 for the list of attendance codes

4.1 Attendance Registers

An attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Where absence is recorded as unexplained (N), the correct code will be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session.

4.2 Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

4.3 The school will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not authorised
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.4 Unplanned absence

On the first day of unplanned absence, parents and carers must contact the school (for example if their child is unable to attend due to ill health). This can be done by telephoning the school attendance line before the registration period closes at 09:20

We may ask for medical evidence of an absence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. However, we will not ask for evidence unnecessarily.

If no contact has been made, the Attendance Officer will contact parents, either through Truancy Call, Text messages, the SIMS App or by telephone.

We will continue to make daily contact until a response is received or if no updates are received regarding the child's wellbeing/projected date to return to school. We may also make general enquiries during this time. This will include trying other contact numbers and/or email addresses, if we receive no response from the main contact number.

If we have had no response within 3 days of continued absence, we may use staff or the local Police to visit the home address to complete a welfare check.

4.5 Planned Absence

We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible.

Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary (coming in before an appointment, arriving late or returning to school after an appointment) and the school should be notified in advance of the appointment. Evidence of any appointment will be required if the school is to consider recording the absence as authorised.

4.6 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the morning register has closed will be marked as late, coded L (or other appropriate code)
- After the morning register has closed will be marked as absent using the appropriate code (or U if it is before the afternoon session has begun)

- Student lateness is monitored and challenged. Pastoral Managers will work with parents if there are barriers to attending school on time. A sanction will be issued for any student that is repeatedly late to either school or lesson.

4.7 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through the SIMS Parent App, which shows live attendance information. In addition, absence levels punctuality to school and punctuality to lessons are reported in writing to parents on twice-yearly academic reports.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be "exceptional circumstances".

Exceptional circumstances can include funerals, weddings (for immediate family members only) and representation in major sporting competitions or public performances. For advice on exceptional circumstances parents should speak to their child's Pastoral Manager.

The Headteacher will consider each application for term-time absence individually, considering specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments, with evidence provided (and assuming appointments could not be made outside of school hours).
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school

Holidays during term time will not be authorised, and if a family takes a holiday that has not been authorised a referral to the Local Authority for the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice will be made.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of an illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Long term/persistent absences due to illness, including mental health, must be supported by evidence from a medical professional, stating that the student is not fit for school or requires an adapted timetable. If these are not forthcoming, the Attendance Officer may ask the parent(s) of the student to complete a Medical Consent form for the school to contact any relevant medical professional(s) and request the information directly.

5.2 Truancy

If a student is found to be truanting lesson(s) within the school site or off school site, then they will be disciplined in line with the school's behaviour policy. This policy can be found on the school's website.

If a student goes missing during the school day, the teacher will inform a member of the pastoral team who will confirm if a child is missing from school. Following a search of the school and checking of CCTV if applicable parents will be called. If we suspect that the child is in immediate danger the police will be contacted.

5.3 Legal Sanctions

The law protects students' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.

Fixed Penalty Notice

Schools can refer parents to the Local Authority for consideration to impose a fine (Fixed Penalty Notice) for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay in accordance to the current penalty notice charges as set by Norfolk County Council. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to refer a Fixed Penalty Notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the Local Authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Fast Track Proceedings

Schools can also make the decision to refer parents to the Local Authority for prosecution after the failure of Fast Track proceedings.

The Fast Track model promotes early intervention by both schools, the LA and parents in cases of persistent absence. It aims to ensure appropriate and time limited intervention is in place to tackle the underlying causes of poor or non-attendance as soon as it becomes apparent. It is a mechanism for ensuring parents focus their attention on their responsibility for ensuring their children attend school both regularly and punctually by engaging with them and specifying, by way of an attendance contract, what improvements need to be made. This should generally be concluded within a 12-week period. If the support process

5.4 Children Missing in Education

Any student who is missing without explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority as a 'Child Missing Education' by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Children in Need Team. This is a legal requirement and the school will include details of the action they have taken. A referral is made in the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate them
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (student file) has been requested by another school

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Marshland High School use the following strategies to promote good attendance

- First day calling
- Attendance Officer intervention
- 3 / 6 / 9 days letters
- Attendance information letters
- The Tutor calling after school to confirm attendance following a day off school
- Attendance Plans to identify barriers to good attendance
- Pastoral Intervention to identify and remove barriers to attendance
- Referral to outside agencies including Early Help and mental Health agencies
- Attendance rewards and recognition in assemblies
- Part time timetables
- Fixed Penalty Notices following a term time holiday longer than 4 ½ days
- Fastrack Attendance Panels
- Use of Norfolk Joint Medical Protocol
- Detentions for students who are persistently late to school
- Working with De Montford University to identify barriers to attendance at school
- Referral to outside agencies such as EHAP, Children's Services, CAMH, Centre 33, Point 1.
- Referral to school counsellor where a mental health concern is a barrier to attending school

7. Attendance Monitoring

Marshland High School will monitor attendance by:

- Weekly monitoring of attendance trends including vulnerable groups
- Compare attendance data against previous years data
- Compare attendance data with national and regional figures
- Compare attendance data against FFT attendance data
- Track attendance for individual students and record actions where needed

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE or Local Authority is updated, and as a minimum every two years. At every review the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

Data will be monitored regularly for the whole school and the identified cohort groups at Local Governing Body meetings and in Targeted Support Meetings with the Local Authority.

The school's Local Governing Body has a link Governor with responsibility for Attendance who will carry out monitoring activities to ensure the school's attendance management processes are consistently and effectively delivered. They will also report back to the school's Link Trustee.

9. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy (incorporating Child Protection)

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Pupils with Medical Needs Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disability Policy
- Mental Health Policy

10. Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| / | Present (am) | Student is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Student is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Student arrives late before register has closed |
| B | Off-site educational activity | Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| D | Dual registered | Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| J | Interview | Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| P | Sporting activity | Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V | Educational trip or visit | Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| W | Work experience | Student is on a work experience placement |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Authorised absence | | |
| C | Authorised leave of absence | Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E | Excluded | Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| H | Authorised holiday | Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Student is at a medical or dental appointment |
| R | Religious observance | Student is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| S | Study leave | Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |

| Unauthorised absence | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| N | Reason not provided | Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence |
| U | Arrival after registration | Student arrived at school after the register closed |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-------------|---|--|
| X | Not required to be in school | Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody |
| Z | Student not on admission register | Register set up but student has not yet joined the school |
| # | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |