



# **DIDSBURY**

HIGH SCHOOL

**POLICY NAME: Attendance**  
**‘Here Today, Here Tomorrow’**

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## **Introduction**

- 1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.
- 1.2 Didsbury High School believe 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.
- 1.3 Poor attendance and lateness may also be detrimental to the social adjustment and development of students. Didsbury High School is therefore fully committed to promoting school attendance by providing an environment and ethos where all students feel safe and can build positive relationships with their peers.
- 1.4 Didsbury High School values all students. As set out in this policy, we will build strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school and identify the reasons for poor attendance.
- 1.5 Didsbury High School recognise 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 admissions, safeguarding, anti-bullying, child protection, safeguarding and behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.
- 1.6 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](#) and through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:
  - Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students
  - Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
  - Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
  - Ensuring every student 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 students have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## **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 (Student 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
- Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools

## **Safeguarding**

- 3.1 Every student should be able 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 students 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 Didsbury High School; safeguarding and promoting the welfare and life opportunities for children encompasses but is not limited to the following: Attendance, Behaviour Management, Health and Safety, Access to the Curriculum and Anti- bullying, 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 schools Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies.



- 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 three other contact numbers in case of emergency.
- 3.6 It is also important for parents to inform the school of any specific vulnerability in relation to their child or home circumstances.

### **Categorising Absence**

- 4.1 Where students 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 Head of School and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.
- 4.3 Parent/carers must advise the school if their child is going to be absent from school.
- 4.4 If a student is too unwell to attend school, their parent/carer must email [mychild@didsburyhighschool.org.uk](mailto:mychild@didsburyhighschool.org.uk) to inform us of the reason for absence, before 08:30
- 4.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:
- 4.4.1 **Illness** Parents 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 **Medical/Dental Appointments** Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students must attend school for part of the day where appropriate. Parents must show evidence of the appointment at the time of requesting absence or as their child signs in or out of school to attend the appointment. We will not allow students to sign out of school or authorise absence for a medical appointment without seeing an appointment card/letter.
- 4.4.3 **Other Authorised Circumstances** This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances.
- 4.4.4 **Suspended or Excluded** Suspension or Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class Head of Year will make arrangements for work to be sent home.
- 4.4.5 **Religious Observance** Didsbury High School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends. On these occasions we ask that the parent request absence for their child, stating the reason.
- 4.4.6 **Study Leave** Study leave may be granted for Year 11 students approaching GCSE examinations. School will offer in school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels.
- 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 (see *Appendix 2*)



- 4.4.8 **Late Arrival** Registration begins at 8.20am. Students arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late (code L). The register will close at 8.50am. Arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late (code U). This is not authorised.
- On arrival after the closing of registers, students must sign in at Main Reception, stating the reason for their late arrival. The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment and evidence of this appointment is shown. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the student has arrived late without justifiable cause.
- 4.4.9 **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 of School.
- 4.4.10 A full list of the Department for Education (DfE) Registration Codes can be found in Appendix 1.
- 4.5 All requests for leave of absence during term time, including holidays, will be responded to in writing.
- 4.5.1 If a student fails to return from a leave of absence and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the student off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Student 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. In such cases the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the magistrate's court. This will follow Manchester Statutory Action Escalation Pathway

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Governance:**

The Academy Committee 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 the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy
- Making sure that the schools attendance management system is delivered effectively
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all students but adapts processes to student's individual needs

### **5.2 The Head of School:**

The Head of School is responsible for:



- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Academy Committee
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting statutory action in line with Manchester's Statutory Action Escalation Pathway or authorising the Safeguarding Team to do so on her behalf.
- Ensuring effective communication between school, the Local Authority and parents/carers of students with Special Educational Needs (SEND) where there are barriers to attendance which relates to the students needs
- Following Manchester City Council's Children Missing Education (CME) Protocol when a student's whereabouts is unknown

### 5.3 **The designated Senior Leader responsible for School Attendance:**

The designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school. Ensuring there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences which encourage all students to attend and achieve
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, including the implementation of the policy and policy review.
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- 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 students and families
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they are followed by all staff

The designated Senior Leader responsible for Attendance is Alex Clayton and can be contacted via telephone on 0161 507 5600.

### 5.4 **The Attendance Officer:**

The school attendance officer and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Actively promoting the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parent/carers
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Monitoring the completion and accuracy of registers, addressing any unexplained absences and identifying any attendance patterns
- Monitoring punctuality of students and issue sanction at breaktime to those who arrive late to school.
- Conducting home visits as and where appropriate
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance and the Head of School.

- Working with the local authority and other key stakeholders to tackle persistent and severe absence
- Documenting interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated
- Liaising with the Head of School and Senior Leader for attendance as to when a request for statutory action, in line with Manchester's Statutory Action Escalation Pathway, is appropriate.

The attendance officer is Jaime Cockroft and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is Heather Chick.

#### **5.5 Senior Mental Health Lead:**

The Senior Mental Health Lead is responsible for:

- Strategic oversight for setting a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Promoting the health and wellbeing of children and young people in school
- Supporting families and school staff to adopt an Emotional Based School Avoidance intervention if applicable.

#### **5.6 Teaching staff:**

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, indicating whether a student is present or absent. This data is recorded and saved on the schools Management Information System (Bromcom) for tutor time and each timetabled lesson.
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parent/carers
- Display attendance targets and information in their classroom

#### **5.7 School Administration Team**

The School Administration Team are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parent/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the schools MIS system (Bromcom) using the correct absence codes.
- Transfer calls from parent/carers to the Head of Year, Attendance Officer or a member of the safeguarding team in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

#### **5.8 Parents/carers:**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and arrives on time (8.20am). Encourage routine at home, for example; bedtimes, PP&R, preparing school bag and uniform etc
- Talk to their child about school and their education. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instill the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment



- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time. Where this is unavoidable, and only in exceptional circumstances, request must be made in writing to the school
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 08:30 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, advising when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstance that may impact on their child's wellbeing and/or attendance at school
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Provide evidence to the school for any medical appointments requiring absence from school, in advance of the appointment where possible
- Engage with school support aimed at improving school attendance
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance by contacting your child's Head of Year, Heather Chick and/or Alex Clayton

#### 5.9 **Students:**

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend every timetabled lesson on time

## **Attendance Data**

### 6.1 **Use of Attendance Data**

The school will:

Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual student level.

Identify whether there are groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern or particular cohorts of students where attendance is affecting their achievement/outcomes.

*Student-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 Academy Committee.

### 6.2 **Analysing attendance data**

The school will:



- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Identify students whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence

### **6.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Head of Year, Head of House and Tutors along with other school leaders. These will be used to facilitate discussions with students and families and put interventions in place.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Provide targeted support to the students it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families

### **6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students 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
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- When a student's absence falls below the expected level, we will do the following as applicable:
  - Send a communication in writing expressing concerns and asking the parent/carer to contact school
  - Engage in a telephone conversation with the parent/carer to discuss their child's attendance and any barriers preventing their child from attending school regularly
  - Arrange a meeting in school, or at the family home, to work collaboratively to improve attendance
  - Initiate a parenting contract for attendance, specific to an individual student and their circumstances
  - Offer support and refer to Early Help Manchester with consent from parent/carer
  - Engage with and refer to Manchester Attendance Team for statutory action



## Support Systems

- 7.1 School recognise that poor attendance can be 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 anxiety-based school avoidance resources most appropriate for support and to accept the support that is offered or advised
- 7.2 Didsbury High School also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee students and children with a social worker
- 7.3 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance for all students. Strategies used will include:
- \* Weekly house points for students who have attended school each day that week
  - \* Monthly rewards for best attending and most improved tutor group on attendance
  - \* Reward trips and events in school with attendance a factor considered
  - \* Attendance reward badges at the end of each academic year
  - \* Promotion of good attendance in assemblies and tutor time
  - \* Attendance report cards for students
  - \* Written communication, telephone calls, parent/carer meetings and/or home visits
  - \* Attendance contracts for parent/carers and students
  - \* Key workers in school / additional learning support
  - \* Beliefs and Values curriculum
  - \* Initiation of an Early Help Assessment and/or referral to appropriate agencies such as M Thrive or Early Help Hub
  - \* Student voice activities to respond to their thoughts around attendance/punctuality and the reward systems in place
  - \* Use of the Emotional Based School Attendance pathway and resources
  - \* Time-limited part-time timetables in exceptional circumstances
  - \* Reintegration support packages following an extended period of absence
- Support offered to families will be child-centred, trauma-informed and inclusive; planned in discussion and agreement with parent/carers and students.



- 7.4 If a student has an Education, Health & Care plan, Didsbury High School will communicate with Manchester City Council EHCP Team at an early stage once they become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the child's needs
- 7.5 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Didsbury High School may consider the use of legal sanctions following Manchester City Councils Code of Conduct

## **Legal Sanctions**

- 8.1 Didsbury High School will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis

### **Penalty notices**

- 8.2 Manchester City Council, upon a request from school, can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice
- 8.3 Before requesting a legal sanction, the school will consider the individual case, including:
- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
  - Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that student
  - Whether appropriate support has been put in place
  - Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate
- 8.4 Each parent who is liable for the student's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence
- 8.5 The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice
- 8.6 If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days
- 8.7 If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same student, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days
- 8.8 A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case



where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

### **Notice to Improve**

- 8.9 If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, a Notice to Improve letter will be issued in line with processes set out in by Manchester City Council's Code of Conduct. This will include a clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the monitoring period which will be up to 6 weeks. Sufficient improvement will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

## **Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes**

The following codes are taken from the DfE’s guidance on school attendance.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
/	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>Attending at a place other than at school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Student 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	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Student is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Student is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registration	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – approved leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Student is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Student has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Student is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Student is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance



I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Student is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Student has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Student is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Student 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	Student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Student is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site closed unexpectedly	Every student absent as the school is closed closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Student 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	Student'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
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Student 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
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	Student has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
Z	Prospective student not on admission register	Student 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 200 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.

Didsbury High School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the student 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 student's school place at Didsbury High School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

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

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

Didsbury High School 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 students 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 student and appropriate statutory action may be undertaken.



## Equality Impact Statement

<p>Names and titles of people involved with this assessment</p> <p>Title of Policy – <b>Attendance</b></p>	<p>Rachel Robinson Assistant Trust Director of Inclusion</p>
<p>Impact assessment carried out with regard to identified characteristics</p>	<p>Race <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Disability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Gender <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Age <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Religion &amp; belief <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Sexual orientation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Summary of any issues/proposed changes</p>	<p>4.4.4 – Added “Suspension or” before exclusion at the start of the paragraph</p> <p>5.4 – Names of attendance officer and DDSL changed</p> <p>5.8 – Names changed in last bullet point</p> <p>6.3 – Rewording of bullet point 1</p>
<p>Date</p>	<p>16.09.25</p>
<p>Date of next review</p>	<p>September 2026</p>