

The Magna Carta School

Attendance Policy

Appendix 1 - Attendance Codes

Appendix 2 – Suspected Truancy (What to do)

All reference to ‘parents’ throughout the document refers to parents or those with day to day care.

Commitment to Attendance

The staff and the Governors of The Magna Carta School are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, students, governors and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community and of which the community is proud.

The Magna Carta School expects that students will attend 100% of the time, unless absence is authorised by the Head of School (or delegated person in school). Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. We are committed to encouraging and supporting parents in ensuring their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

Expectations

All students will

- Attend The Magna Carta School regularly
- Attend The Magna Carta School punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss promptly with their form tutor/*Pastoral Lead*, any problems that may affect their attendance

All parents will

- Ensure their child attends school daily
- Ensure their child arrives punctually (*by 8.40am ready for registration at 8.45am*) and prepared for the day
- Contact the school before 8.00am (24 hour Absence Line 01784 454320) on the first day of absence
- Contact the school on each subsequent day of absence
- Respond to the Absence Call if they have been contacted
- Provide The Magna Carta School with current contact details (addresses/contact telephone numbers).
- Inform The Magna Carta School immediately of any changes in contact details
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child, including contact details of all those with parental responsibility.

The Magna Carta School will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Respond to students’ or parents’ concerns

- Keep regular and accurate records of morning and afternoon attendance and punctuality using electronic registration
- Monitor individual students' attendance and punctuality (*set appropriate sanctions where necessary in line with school behaviour policy*)
- Contact parents using Absence Call when a student fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- Follow up on any suspected truancy (Appendix 2)
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from the GP or other relevant body may be requested
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of recognition
- Work closely with the Education Welfare Officer to monitor and support students' attendance and punctuality
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by The Magna Carta School and Education Welfare may result in legal action by the Local Authority (LA).

Rewards

Students will be rewarded for good attendance and punctuality using the schools reward system. Students are rewarded in the following way for attendance:

100% Attendance for Week: 2 reward points
 100% Punctuality for Week: 1 reward point
 100% Attendance for Full School year: 500 reward points

These rewards are solely for students whose attendance is 100% for the given period of time.

In addition, incentive schemes will be run each year, where students with 100% attendance for a term will be entered into a prize draw.

Parent Responsibility and The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his/her age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he/she may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Students Leaving During the School Day

- Students are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside school time.
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence during the school day including the time of leaving, the expected return time and whether the student is being collected or will make their own way to their destination.
- Students must sign out on leaving the school and sign back in on their return.
- Where a student is being collected from school, parents are requested to report to the school office before the student is allowed to leave the site.
- All students leaving with permission will be given a written authorisation slip by the school before the student is allowed to leave the site.
- If a student leaves school site without permission parents/carers will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the police to register the student as a missing person.

Punctuality / Lateness

Punctual arrival at school is crucial, and registration at the beginning of the day with a student's tutor is one of the most important periods in the day. It allows the student to have time to prepare for the day as well as completing tasks set by the form tutor, which relate to the student's year group. Late arrival at school causes disruption to an individual's learning and to that of the other students in the class. It is essential therefore that all students arrive at school on time.

- The school gates are locked at 8.40am, students should ensure they arrive on the school site before this time
- Registration takes place at 8.45am and students who arrive in their tutor room after 8.45am will be recorded as late to school
- Registers close at 9.05am and after this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the LA*
- Persistent lateness by a student will be dealt with through school detentions and may be referred to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Department
- This does not apply to cases where the student is being transported to school in transport supplied by the Local Authority
- Students arriving after 8.45am should sign in at the front of school with the Attendance Officer
- The afternoon registration will be taken during period 5, which commences at 1.20pm.

Registers

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the school must keep an attendance register.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Head of School or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Categorisation of Absence

Any student who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This includes:

- Holidays during term time (there is no entitlement to holidays in term time, Education Act 2006 amended Sept 2013)
- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Excessive illness without medical evidence.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note: Students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

Registration & Lateness

The school day begins at 8.45am in which registers will be taken promptly. The registers will remain open until 9.05am. Students arriving after 8.45am, but before 9.05am will be coded as late (L code) and have relevant school sanctions imposed. Any student arriving after this time will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence (U code) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed and also have relevant sanctions imposed. Students arriving after 8.45am should sign in at the front of school with the Attendance Officer.

The afternoon registration will be taken during period 5.

Escalation Process

If a child is absent for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school on the first day of absence (before 8.00am) and each day thereafter. However if the child is absent and no reason has been provided the following procedure will apply:

First/Second Day Absence

The school will contact the parent/carers to request reason for absence via electronic communication. School will note any reason given for absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised as determined by the school. A message will be left where no contact can be made.

Continued Absence

The school will telephone the parent to request reason for absence. School will note any reason given for absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised. If no response is received by the school further contact may be made by the school by other means (e.g. letter/ personal call/truancy patrol)

Ten Days Absence and more

Any student who is absent without clear explanation, such as a medical note, for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to Education Welfare. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

The school can remove a student from roll (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 – Section 8) if the child has:

- Has not returned for 10 consecutive school days immediately following an authorised period of absence
- Has not been granted leave of absence and has been absent for 20 consecutive school days

the school and local authority (LA) may not remove a pupil from roll under these circumstances unless they:

- Do not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend due to "sickness or any unavoidable cause"; and
- Have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil

Where a child is absent from school the following procedure will be followed for welcoming them back. If they've been off for one day, the tutor welcomes them back and checks they are ok. If they are off for a few days, further communication from the tutor will be made and provision made for the student catching up with work. For longer term absences a more formal reintegration will take place with a plan to catch up, some sessions may be provided where the student is given support by the Learning Support Department (also refer to TMCS Special Educational Needs Policy & Medical Policy).

If there is an occasion when, in the opinion of the school, there are safeguarding concerns surrounding an individual pupil, then an immediate referral to the local authority will be made.

Frequent Absence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is unhelpful to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s by:

1. Phone call to parent by tutor/ House Pastoral Lead and issues discussed with student within school.
2. Letter sent to parents stating concerns.
3. Meeting at school with tutor/Pastoral Lead or member of the Leadership Team.

If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to Education Welfare.

Persistent Absence (PA)

The Department for Education defines 'persistent absenteeism' when a child misses 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is considerably damaging a child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We, and the local authority, monitor all absence thoroughly. Any child that is seen to have reached or likely to reach the PA mark will trigger immediate action.

Parents will be notified by letter and invited to a meeting where an action plan will be drawn up to address the issues identified.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance

Education Welfare may also issue a Penalty Notice to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education welfare Officers. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

Exceptional Leave of absence

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday

Any savings that you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. It is widely known that the link between a child's attendance and attainment is irrefutable. The average hourly income of graduates is more than double of those who leave school with no qualifications.

School will only authorise leave of absence in term time in extremely exceptional circumstances (e.g. immediate family bereavement)

The school holiday dates, external exam dates and INSET days are published a year in advance. Leave of absence in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Where absence in term time is unavoidable, a Leave of Absence application form must be requested from the school or downloaded from the website and submitted for consideration by the Head of School Head or a member of staff acting on their behalf, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. If leave is taken in term time without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare will be notified.

The Government have changed the regulations which permitted Headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year or to grant extended leave of more than ten days in exceptional circumstances. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which becomes law on 1st September 2013 state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. (The amendment has not defined 'exceptional circumstances' and therefore the Head of School will be responsible for deciding what they consider to be 'exceptional circumstances').

Penalty Notices:

- The issuing of a penalty notice for unauthorised leave of absence may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances :
 - Unauthorised leave of absence in term time (5 days/10 sessions or more within a three month period – this need not be consecutive) without the authorisation of the school
- Each parent/carer is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown the parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised. Any absence for illness that runs before or after a request for leave of absence will not be authorised without medical evidence. This could result in absence becoming 5 days or more and eligible for a fixed penalty.
- The amount payable per child on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent/carer if paid within 21 days of receipt of notice, rising to £120 per parent/carer if paid within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

Truancy Patrol

When a student comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the student's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter may be sent to the parent/carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 school days, a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent/carer. Again the penalty notice fines are as follows:

- The amount payable per child on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent/carer if paid within 21 days of receipt of notice, rising to £120 per parent/carer if paid within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

Education Welfare monitors the attendance of all children on a weekly basis. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will work with school staff and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.

If attendance problems cannot be resolved by school then the school will make a referral to Education Welfare. The EWO will try to resolve the situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed, but unauthorised absence persists, the EWO can use sanctions such as parenting contracts, penalty notices and prosecution.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, could result upon conviction in a magistrate's court, to a fine not exceeding £2500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

All students must be given a registration mark each day. There are two sessions that require a registration mark. Registration will be taken by subject teachers during period 1 (am registration) and period 5 (pm registration).

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age students	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to students	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 2 – Suspected Truancy

Suspected truancy - where students are not present in class and have previously been registered as present for that day.

MSA message (an email to MSA@magnacarta.surey.sch.uk) sent by class teacher/class teacher also Direct Message (using Novell messenger) to Attendance Officer.



Attendance Officer to establish if student is anywhere else (e.g. LS/FOS/*Pastoral support*) / MSA and on call staff to complete a school site sweep.



Attendance Officer monitor student for next period - *another missing mark notify Pastoral Manager, Level 5 behaviour* (skip to next work flow step where student(s) are identified as leaving school site).



Attendance Office and Pastoral Manager to liaise regarding contacting home. If student is on Safeguarding Register as being at risk of CSE then 101 to be called by Attendance Officer.

Attendance Officer to receive update of CSE list from Deputy DSL, on a weekly basis.



Pastoral Manager put onto SIMS (referring to *Pastoral Lead*)



If it is established the student was missing from 1 lesson only without leaving school site Attendance Officer to update Pastoral Manager who will notify teacher to issue class detention cc Head of Faculty to monitor student (Level 3)