



# The Magna Carta School – Unity Schools Trust

## Attendance Policy



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### 1. Aims

The aim of this policy is to encourage students to attend The Magna Carta School (TMCS) every day (190 days per year). Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all students and is therefore seen as everyone's responsibility in school. The Magna Carta School seeks to ensure that all of our students receive an education which maximises their opportunities and enables them to achieve their full academic potential. There is clear evidence demonstrating a strong link between good academic attainment and good attendance at school, therefore, good attendance and punctuality are a priority within the ethos of this school.

The school strives to provide a welcoming and caring environment whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure. All staff will work with students and their families to ensure that each student attends school regularly and punctually. The school will establish an effective system to monitor and track attendance and punctuality. It will also implement an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their levels of attendance and punctuality and recognises consistently high levels of both. The school will challenge the behaviour of both students and their families who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

The school recognises some students find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with students and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Improving school attendance will be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the Local Governing Council (LGC), the Trust, the local authority, and other local partners.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting 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 ensure students have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and reward punctuality and attendance to school and lessons. Students are celebrated each week during their year group assembly for 100% attendance that week. Additional rewards are given at the end of each term for students who maintain 100% attendance or who have significantly improved their attendance.

## **2. Strategies for promoting and improving attendance**

### **2.1 Working together at The Magna Carta School to improve attendance**

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All members of the school community at The Magna Carta School work together to:

#### **EXPECT**

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all students and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

#### **MONITOR**

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

#### **LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND**

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with students and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them

#### **FACILITATE SUPPORT**

Remove barriers in school and help students and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

#### **FORMALISE SUPPORT**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

#### **ENFORCE**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the student's right to an education.

### 3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the guidance in [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:

- I. Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- II. Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- III. Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- IV. [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- V. [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- VI. This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### 4. Roles and responsibilities

#### 4.1 Parental responsibilities

Parents have the primary responsibility to:

- Ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends school every day and on time, to fulfil the statutory requirement of registration
- Make sure that their children leave home at a time that ensures that they arrive to school on time
- Contact the school to report their child's absence before 8:30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that their child strives for a 100% attendance and 'on time' punctuality record
- Ensure that their child attains a minimum attendance of 96% missing no more than 8 days per year

#### 4.2 School's responsibilities

- Each form tutor is required to take an attendance register at the start of the morning session
- All teachers are required to take a class register every lesson, with the period 4 register counting as registration for the afternoon session
- The register shows whether the student is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent
- If the student of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised
- Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered as satisfactory justification for absence
- All other absences must be treated as unauthorised
- Since all absences are to be treated as unauthorised unless and until a satisfactory explanation is accepted, procedures for chasing up explanations and amending registers will be consistently applied. These include phoning and writing to parents.

- The school will intervene and support students and parents where attendance falls below 90%, with the aim of helping the family to improve their child's attendance to school (see intervention strategies above for examples).

#### **4.3 The Local Governing Council**

The Local Governing Council 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
- Holding the Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy

#### **4.4 The Head of School**

The Head of School is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Approving exceptional term time absence
- Approving fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

#### **4.5 The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance**

The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Supporting staff with meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring targeted intervention and support to students and families

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is Kajade Patrick, they can be contacted via email on [kpatrick@magnacarta.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:kpatrick@magnacarta.surrey.sch.uk).

#### **4.6 The Attendance Officer**

The school Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 6)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- 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 designated senior leader, the education welfare officer (EWO), Surrey Inclusion Officers (SIO), Year Team Leads, Student Support Advisors and the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Head of School/Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance (authorised by the Head of School) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Attendance Officer is Lorraine Searle, they can be contacted via telephone on 01784 454320 and via email on [schoolattendance@magnacarta.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:schoolattendance@magnacarta.surrey.sch.uk).

#### **4.7 Form tutors**

The form tutor is responsible for:

- Establishing a positive ethos within their tutor group regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Taking the official morning register, which is a legal document, at the beginning of Form time, at the beginning of the school day.
- Taking the register using SIMS in the form room or in the assembly hall during form time. To take a paper register if the SIMS system is not working and send it to the Attendance Office in M17 within 15 minutes of the start of the form time.
- Familiarising themselves with the guidelines for using SIMS, together with the register codes, their meanings and appropriate uses that are distributed at the start of the year. Reporting any problems with the SIMS system immediately to the Attendance Officer.
- Following up with students/parents/carers, about any reasons for absence. It is important that all notes from parents or medical evidence must be given to the Attendance Officer immediately in all circumstances – no notes are to remain with the tutor.
- The decision to authorise an absence is, in the first instance, the decision of the Head of School.

#### **4.8 Class teachers**

The class teacher is responsible for:

- Establishing a positive ethos within the class regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that the register, which is a legal document, is completed promptly and accurately.
- Taking the register using SIMS during every lesson, noting the exact minutes of lateness for any students and ensuring that this is completed and saved within 15 minutes of the start of the lesson.
- Taking a paper register if the SIMS system is not working and send it to the Attendance Office by the end of the lesson.
- Updating the register if a child arrives late to lesson after the register has been saved

#### **4.9 Student Support Advisors and the Pastoral Manager**

The pastoral manager and student support advisors are responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance concerns
- Implementing interventions: running attendance reports, attending parent meetings, school attendance meetings, and others as appropriate
- Liaise with Year Team Leads
- Communicate concerns with parents
- Liaise with and communicate to the Pastoral Manager, Year Team Lead, Attendance Officer and designated senior leader, about concerns over students with less than 90% attendance

#### **4.10 Year Team Leads**

The Year Team Leads is responsible for:

- Highlighting and establishing a positive ethos within the year group regarding attendance and punctuality, through assemblies and the implementation of the rewards system.
- Monitoring attendance and punctuality for the students in the year group to all lessons, especially lessons 1 and 4.
- Monitoring and updating the attendance tracker on a weekly basis, adhering to the procedural steps associated with the tracker.

- Analysing the attendance and punctuality data sent to them by the Attendance Officer (AO) and identifying students giving cause for concern.
- Following up with the student's tutor initial concerns relating to a student's attendance and punctuality.
- Working with the Attendance Officer and Student Support Advisors to contact parents regarding a student's non-attendance.
- Referring to attendance within assemblies on a weekly basis.
- Meeting regularly with the school Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and Attendance Officer to discuss identified students with recurring issues of poor attendance or punctuality and to consider a positive course of action to assist these students. Logging all agreed interventions onto the attendance tracker.
- Discussing and refer students to the EWO and Surrey Inclusion Officer (SIO) when appropriate.
- Informing the Designated Senior Leader of the students referred to the EWO or SIO and log on the attendance tracker.
- Attending school attendance meetings to consider support strategies to effect a positive change in the student's pattern of attendance.
- Referring to and liaising with other support agencies working with students with poor levels of attendance and/or punctuality to school.

#### **4.11 School admin staff**

School admin staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Transferring calls from parents to the Year Team Lead or Student Support Advisor in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Recording on SIMs the students who arrive or leave during the school day after the register has closed
- Monitoring and highlighting patterns of students reporting for first aid to the Attendance Officer, the Student Support Advisors and the appropriate Year Team Lead

#### **4.12 Students**

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.
- Attend every timetabled session on time
- All students are expected to take full responsibility for their own attendance and punctuality. They will be helped in doing this by:
  - Self-monitoring of attendance and asking their tutor weekly for regular updates on their total attendance levels to date
  - Not staying off school for 'headaches' or other minor ailments
  - regular reminders from tutors and subject teachers about the need for good attendance and punctuality.
  - reminding their parents that the school's Attendance Officer should be contacted by phone or through Edulink on their first day of absence from school and then on each day of their child's absence, to confirm that they are still unfit to return to school.

## 5. Recording attendance

### 5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register 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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

(See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes).

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- 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

Students must arrive in school by 8:40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 9:05am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:30pm and will be kept open until 12:45pm.

### 5.2 Unplanned absence

- Parents/Carers are expected to contact school through Edulink or by telephoning the school on 01784454320 and pressing option 1 on the first day of their child's absence by 8:30am and explain to the Attendance Officer why their child is absent and when they are likely to return to school.
- Parents are then expected to contact the school on each day of their child's absence to confirm that they are still unfit to return to school.
- We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the student has
  - an attendance of 90% or below;
  - has received a stage 2 letter
  - the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a letter from the doctor, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- The Attendance Officer will enter the appropriate absence code in the SIMS register.
- If the period of absence is more than 5 consecutive days, then parents should provide medical or other documentary evidence to the Attendance Officer to explain why.
- The Attendance Officer will then inform the Year Team Lead.

### 5.3 Planned absence

#### Exceptional Term Time Leave and Religious Observance

Exceptional leave may be requested by parents by filling out the application for leave of absence form, which can be found within the noticeboard on Edulink and sending it to [schoolattendance@magnacarta.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:schoolattendance@magnacarta.surrey.sch.uk) at least 10 school days before the leave is requested.

Exceptional leave may only be granted by the Head of School. It will normally only be granted once in a student's compulsory period of schooling and for a maximum period of 5 school days and then only if the attendance for the academic year in which it is requested will not fall below 96% as a result of the leave. Before granting leave, consideration will also be given to any examination periods or other important calendared events that will be missed if the leave were to be granted. Exceptional leave requests will not be granted for holiday absence.

Unauthorised leave of absence in term time of 5 days/10 sessions or more, within a three month period without the authorisation of the school, may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice. Note: These do not have to be consecutive.

These are issued by the Local Authority in accordance with Surrey County Council's Code of Conduct. The local authority can issue penalty notices for any unauthorised 'exceptional leave' to each parent/carer concerned. Please note that it will be per parent per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period, but within 28 days. If the penalty notice remains unpaid, each parent will receive a summons to the Magistrates Court. The summons will be for the original offence of failing to ensure that your child attends school regularly. If unauthorised leave is repeated the local authority may summons each parent to court without a penalty notice being issued.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence, including religious observance, as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

### 5.4 Lateness and punctuality

Creating and encouraging the habit of good punctuality to both lessons and to school reduces disruption to learning and leads to higher levels of achievement. An added benefit for students is that it develops a habit that is one of the key requirements for employers when they recruit new staff.

The Magna Carta School promotes The Magna Carta Way, encouraging students to transition to lessons in an efficient manner. Poor punctuality will be sanctioned with a break or lunch time detention in most circumstances.

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U)

### 5.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Send out an automated truancy notification to the parent/carer



- Where possible will call the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or call the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the Education Welfare Officer, Surrey Inclusion Officer, Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or the police.

## **5.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via:

- termly reports
- attendance notifications on Edulink
- attendance letters
- Parents can also proactively check the attendance of their child in real time on Edulink.

## **6. Monitoring and analysing attendance data**

### **6.1 Monitoring and analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data at least every half term 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 and interventions to address these patterns
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

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 local governing council.

### **6.2 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

## **7. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 years by the Senior Leader in charge of attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Local Governing Council.

## **8. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- I. [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](#) - contains information on Children Missing out on Education (CME) and Pupils Missing Out On Education (PMOOE)
- II. [Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy](#)

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

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

Authorised absence		
Code	Definition	Scenario
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		
Code	Definition	Scenario
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

Other		
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