

# Moor House School & College



## Attendance Policy June 2017

<b>Version:</b>	3
<b>This Policy Is To Be Read By:</b>	All parents and carers, staff and Governors
<b>Review cycle:</b>	Every 2 years
<b>Next review date:</b>	June 2019
<b>Status:</b>	Draft / Sent to P&A Committee / Approved by P&A Committee/ Sent to FGB/ <b>Approved by FGB</b>
<b>The person responsible for this policy is</b>	Principal
<b>The committee responsible for this policy is</b>	Progress and Attainment

**Moor House School & College (Moor House)** is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school and college regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole Moor House community – students, parents and carers, teaching, therapy and support staff and for residential students, residential care workers have a responsibility for ensuring good attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

The policy has been drawn up based on current government and guidance and statutory Regulations. Moor House will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

All at Moor House have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the community and look forward to coming to Moor House every day. Members of staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

The Principal will oversee, direct and co-ordinate Moor House's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied. As the Attendance Leader, the Principal will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, students and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good attendance) and that the Governors are fully aware of attendance data and targets. At Moor House attendance data is monitored half termly by the Every Child Matters Committee and reported to the Full Governing Body through the Principal's Report. The Principal will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

Moor House is required to mark the attendance register each day. The administration team will enter the registration information into the data management system SIMS. Students in Moor House College are required to advise partner colleges if they are absent. This is done by contacting the partner college's absence line. While students are encouraged to be as independent as possible in doing this, staff within Moor House College will advise the partner college if necessary. Parents and students should be aware that authorisation of absence at Moor House does not automatically mean that absence from a partner college will be authorised.

### **Categorising absence**

A mark will be made in respect of each child or young person following the close of the registers. Any student who is not present will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted Moor House at a later stage, it will be recorded in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Principal.

Moor House recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children and young people. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a student's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-attendance is acceptable and can render children and young people extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a student is clearly unwell, staff at the Moor House will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with Moor House**.

If no explanation about an absence is received **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised.

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- Where leave has been granted by in advance, for example –
- A student is to participate in an approved performance
- A student is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered
- Where Moor House staff are satisfied that the child is too ill to attend
- Where the student has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of hours wherever possible, and to return their child immediately afterwards – or send him / her in-beforehand
- Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's /student's parents belong
- The student lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority
- The student is excluded
- In other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised.

Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- No explanation has been given by the parent
- Moor House staff is not satisfied with the explanation
- The student or parents are staying at home to mind the house
- The student or parents are shopping during school hours
- The student is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday
- The student is absent without prior permission
- The student has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence
- The student is on holiday in term time- where prior permission has not been granted.

### **Approved educational activity**

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school and college will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

### **Absences after close of class registers**

Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the class tutor or teacher and reported to the administration team. They will advise the Principal or in her absence one of the Assistant Headteachers.

## **Collection and analysis of data**

Attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence.

## **Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

Moor House has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week. A member of the administration team will contact the families for an explanation of absence and refer to the Principal.

## **First-day calling**

Moor House has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents or carers will be telephoned on the first day if a student is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage students who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents'/ carers' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, Moor House will send a letter to them by first class post. Social services may be contacted in certain circumstances.

## **Lateness and punctuality**

Students are expected to arrive on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Students who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless there is a legitimate reason for the student to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A student who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service. If a student arrives by taxi and the vehicle is regularly late, Moor House will contact the LA transport department and if necessary the SEN caseworker to report the matter and request that action be taken.

For health and safety reasons it is important that there is a record of who is in the building. Students arriving late should therefore report to the Reception to sign in. It is important that all students arriving late follow this procedure.

For the same reason it is important that parents/ carers of students leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning later in the day inform Reception. The administration office will record that the child has left the site and will mark them back in when they return.

## **Post-registration truancy**

Post-registration truancy occurs when a student goes missing from site having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the student will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Moor House takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a student appears to have left the premises (or for college students the partner college site) without authorisation, Moor House will try to make contact with his/her parents or carers immediately, consult the risk assessment for that student and report as a missing person. (See Missing Student's Policy for more detail)

## **Term-time Holidays**

Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time. Moor House will consider every application individually, its policy is **NOT** to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off for family holidays is not a right. An application must be made in writing using the appropriate form (see Appendix 2), with appropriate evidence, a minimum of two weeks in advance of the intended holiday. The request for absence form is available on the parent portal of the MHS&C website.

Moor House School & College will consider authorising holidays for:

- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays out of term-time
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- Parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect

Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- Cheaper cost of holiday
- Availability of the desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in scheduled holiday periods

Moor House will respond to all requests for a leave of absence using the appropriate form (see appendix 3) giving the reasons for the decision.

Moor House will **NOT** authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, i.e. SATS and GCSE examinations.

## **Extended leave of absence**

In considering absence for extended trips overseas Moor House will take account of the following:

- A visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday'

- Such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up
- Parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip)
- The reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved
- Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the student undertakes some set work during this period

### **Parents'/Carers' responsibilities**

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Moor House.

Moor House expects parents/carers will:

- Ensure their children attend regularly
- Support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum
- Not expect Moor House to agree automatically any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence.

Parents and carers will also be expected to:

- Notify Moor House on the first day of absence by telephone or reporting directly to the administration office
- Ensure their children arrive on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day
- Work in partnership with Moor House for example by attending parents'/ carers' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their children's work and activities
- Contact Moor House without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their child's school life

Moor House will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

### **Students' responsibilities**

All students should be aware of the importance of regular attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending regularly, they should speak to their class tutor. Students should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. Students have a responsibility for reporting to the Reception if they arrive late.

## Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a student's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, Moor House will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and student to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

## Referral to the Education Attendance Service

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the student is failing to attend at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Attendance Service of the local authority placing the student.

## Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare Service may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school or college and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 42 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

## Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

- A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by Moor House or Education Welfare Officer.
- Where a child is taken out for a holiday during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised.
- Students identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

**Attendance Codes****Code Description****Type**

B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised
D	Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	Authorised
F	Agreed extended family holiday	Authorised
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised
H	Agreed family holiday	Authorised
I	Illness	Authorised
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late but arrived before the register closed	Late
M	Medical or dental appointment	Authorised
N	No reason for the absence provided yet	Unauthorised
O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised
S	Study leave	Authorised

T	Traveller absence	Authorised
U	Late and arrived after the register closed	Unauthorised
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Education Activity
Y	Partial and forced closure	Not counted in possible attendances

**APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE  
REQUEST FOR TIME OFF**

At Moor House School & College, we consider that it is necessary for your child to attend as regularly as possible. However, there are occasions when we understand that time off during the term is unavoidable for exceptional circumstances.

If you need to take your child out of school or college, please complete this form **prior to making any bookings**.

Please also complete this form for all **medical appointments**.

Please sign below and return for authorisation; the form will then be photocopied, with a copy sent back to you for your records.

<b>Name of Student</b>	
<b>Class</b>	
<b>Date(s) out and time(s) of collection and return</b>	
<b>Reason ( please state why this is an exceptional circumstance)</b>	
<b>Signed by parents/ guardians / carers</b>	
<b>Authorised by</b> (MHS Senior Management)	
<b>Not Authorised by</b> (MHS Senior Management)	

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

Date staff contacted for info / confirmation	
Date copies taken & sent home	

## A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CARERS

### 1. When does my child need to be at Moor House?

Your child should be at Moor House by 8:30 am, but not before 8:15 am, to be ready to go into class at 8:45am.

The register is taken at 8.55am. Afternoon school starts at 1:45 p.m. (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday) 2pm on Wednesday and 12.45pm on Friday.

### 2. What happens if my child is late?

- Registration finishes at 9.15 in the morning and 30 minutes after the commencement of the afternoon session.
- Students who arrive after registration should report to the school office.
- A series of unauthorised late marks may lead to referral to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer)

### 3. Does Moor House need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent or carer to telephone Moor House on the first day of absence. We will telephone you if your child has not arrived by 9:30 am. On return, a letter explaining the absence is expected. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

An accumulation of unauthorised absences will lead to a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

### 4. What reasons will be accepted for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment (Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Attendance at special events e.g. graduation ceremonies, family weddings

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school / college well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

#### 5. What is unacceptable?

Moor House-will not authorise absences other than those in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays, day trips, shopping or birthdays are not classed as exceptional.

#### 6. Can we take family holidays during term-time?

Family holidays should be taken out of term time.

#### 7. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas trip to visit relatives. What should I do?

We recognise that it is important that families are in contact with each other, but these visits must take place out of term time.

#### 8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education.

#### 9. My child is trying to avoid coming to Moor House- What should I do?

Contact your child's tutor immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with-work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend and work together to tackle the problem.