



Adopted:	September 2016
Last reviewed	September 2017
Next Review	September 2018
Ratified By Governors	November 2017

## **Attendance Policy**

At The De Montfort School we are unwavering in our drive to continue to improve the attendance of students in order to ensure that every child has the ability to succeed. We demand the highest level of attendance from students so they may develop their full potential during their time at school.

It is our aim to promote and maintain a culture where excellent attendance and punctuality is recognised and rewarded. Missing out on education has a significant effect on students' life opportunities. Everyone associated with TDMS – students, parents, all teaching and support staff and external agencies will do all in their power to ensure that excellent attendance and punctuality maintain an integral part of the school's work.

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

#### **Deputy Head Inclusion and Assistant Headteacher**

- Oversee and monitor whole school attendance and punctuality, initiating whole school policies as required. This will be achieved by liaison with the Senior Leadership Team and other relevant members of staff, including Pastoral, Inclusion and the Attendance Administration Officer who together will form the Attendance Improvement Group (AIG)
- Chair for the Attendance Improvement Group
- Support the whole school community in promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and Heads of Learning / Senior Intervention Tutors (HOL/SIT) to devise any necessary re-integration programmes for students who are persistent absentees (PA) or at risk of long term absence

#### **Assistant Headteacher**

- Responsible for up-keeping and monitoring of attendance tracker
- Ensure contact is undertaken on the first day of absence and where there are on-going concerns
- If a student is slipping below the attendance target (95%), instigate the action taken based on the individual student circumstances and discussions with SM team
- Co-ordinate the sending of letters – liaise with the Attendance Administration Assistant and ensure that this is recorded on the whole school tracker
- Organise ISAPs when there is no improvement despite all previous interventions
- Gather information regarding any barriers to a student attending school and pass information to SW

## **Heads of Learning**

- Monitor the attendance and punctuality for their year groups (including the monitoring of relevant sub-groups)
- Liaise closely with Senior Intervention Tutors and form tutors to reward positive attendance and support where there are concerns that require further action
- Liaise with the Attendance Improvement Group about individual students or forms
- Meet regularly with the Attendance Improvement Group to sustain good communication and identify and intervene with individual students who are PA or at risk of becoming PA. Refer students if they are a persistent problem
- Act on daily information from staff concerning student absences or habitual lateness
- Liaise with parents/carers where attendance and/or punctuality are a cause for concern by following the attendance and monitoring procedure
- Intervene early to arrange and attend meetings with parents and relevant staff where there are attendance issues (eg subject truancy)
- Promote good attendance through assemblies and ensure that the Form Attendance Boards are updated weekly
- Offer support and work closely with the parents/carers of students who are persistent absentees or at risk of becoming so

## **Attendance Administration Assistant**

- Compile attendance data and information for relevant staff
- Make contact with parents/carers on the first day of absence for all students, even where the reason for absence is known
- Send letters home raising concerns that attendance has fallen below the school target
- Contact parents/carers should any student leave the site without permission
- Work closely with the Attendance Improvement Group to monitor students who present concerns
- Liaise with the Attendance Improvement Group where there are concerns about individual students or forms. Issue Fixed Penalty Notice requests as per the LA (Local Authority) guidance

## **Form Tutors**

- Encourage all students to maintain excellent attendance and punctuality
- Update the Form Attendance Boards weekly
- Direct any correspondence from parents/carers with regard to absences to the Attendance Administration Assistant
- Keep an overview of students' attendance; follow up unexplained absences and check patterns of absence and poor punctuality by monitoring Student Planner
- Liaise with HOL (Head of Learning) to pass on concerns about individual students

## **Subject Teachers**

- Take an electronic register at the start of each lesson (within the first 10 minutes)
- Pass on any concerns about absentees from lessons to the Attendance Administration Assistant as soon as possible
- Use the Student Planner and SIMS to record any issues with punctuality – pass on any concerns to the appropriate form tutor

## Parents

- Ensure regular attendance at school under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act
- If your child will not be attending school please inform the school by phone on **01386 442060 by 9.00am on the first morning of absence**
- If no contact is made to school to report an absence via telephone or at the school office, the attendance team will contact you by phone or will do a home visit

## Appointments

- If you need to take your child to the doctor or dentist please try to make the appointment **before or after school.**
- We know this isn't always possible so please only take your child out of school for the appointment – **not the whole day!**
- We would appreciate it if you Please come into school to show the Attendance Team your appointment card
- If you have a hospital letter, please come into school to show it to the Attendance Team

## Students

All students are expected to attend school and be punctual.

Good attendance:

- leads to a good attendance record and means you don't miss any morning notices
- leads to better achievement because you attend the **WHOLE** of all of your classes
- leads to understanding that school is important and education is valuable
- helps you develop a sense of responsibility for yourself and towards others and is a sign of good character
- is respectful to your teacher and to your classmates and builds good habits for later in life when your employer pays you to be on time
- is very important. Research shows that attendance and punctuality are the single most important factors in being successful in school

## Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

- Work closely with relevant staff to establish caseload and feedback information on work in progress
- Liaise with the Attendance Improvement Group where there are concerns about individual students or forms
- Liaise with SM to ensure communication is up to date
- Attend school attendance meetings organised by SM to monitor individual students' attendance
- Organise all panel meetings where necessary
- Carry out home visits
- Monitor PA students' re-integration with the SM after long term absence
- Lead on prosecuting parents who have children that are PA. *If found guilty of the offence at the lower end, upon conviction the parent may be fined up to £1000. If found guilty at the higher end for the aggravated offence, upon conviction the parent may be fined up to £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment*

## Governors

- To have read, ratified and understood the Attendance policy
- To hold the Senior Leadership to account in what they are doing regarding strategies implemented to raise attendance
- To know the school's attendance figures and our targets, and how they compare to National Statistics

## Student registration requirements

- Registers are completed by staff for every lessons and tutor time
- Students are given a morning and afternoon mark to indicate their attendance to both school sessions
- Registers must be taken promptly at the start of each lesson (within the first 10 minutes) and during form time. Staff must contact the Attendance Administration Assistant as soon as possible if there are any concerns about absentees

There are four broad classifications in attendance registers:

**Present** – the student is on the premises at the time of registration.

**Approved Educational Activity** – the student is engaged in an approved, supervised activity off site, for example field trip, educational visit, sporting activity or work experience.

**Authorised Absence** – an absence authorised by the school which includes illness, medical appointments, bereavement or other circumstances where the school deems attendance to be inappropriate.

**Unauthorised Absence** – is an absence where the student does not have good cause to be missing from school. Unauthorised absence can be defined in the following ways:

### Punctuality

Students who are late disrupt the rest of the class, it can be embarrassing for the child, and they miss out on the information building blocks of the day as well as the social aspect before the school day begins. Punctuality is a good life skill that's best learned and practiced early.

The gates at The De Montfort School close at 8.55am. Any pupil arriving after 9.00am is considered to be late to school; this will be monitored by the Form Tutor. They will be expected to sign in at school Reception until 9.15am, when registers close. After this point students need to sign in to school with the Attendance Administration Assistant. Any student arriving after 9.45am will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation, ie transport issue, medical issue or exceptional circumstance. This may ultimately place parents at risk of legal action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Parents will be informed in writing if this applies to their child.

All these procedures are very important. In the event of a fire drill it is vital there is an accurate record of who is on site at any time. It is equally important that all TDMS staff sign in and out using the registration system located in reception.

Truancy – this is when students fail to attend college when they should, including leaving the college premises after registration. It also includes action by parents/carers who initiate unauthorised absence by students or who collude with it. Shopping trips, day trips or absence to look after someone else would all constitute examples of unauthorised absence.

School refusal – this is chronic non-attendance over a period of time, usually an indicator of wider family, psychological or behavioural problems.

The school will aim to highlight and resolve any difficulties regarding a student's attendance as early as possible, using our rigorous monitoring and intervention procedures and pastoral support programmes to help solve any problems. If necessary, the Educational Welfare Officer will be involved in more complex cases.

### **Attendance Procedures**

#### **Registration**

- Anyone taking students out of school for any reason must supply the Attendance Administration Assistant with a list of names and email the list to the appropriate SIT, HOL and teaching staff
- Staff must inform colleagues of any students taking part in events in school that require students to be off timetable

#### **First Day Contact**

- The Attendance Administration Assistant will organise first day contact, even when the reasons for absence are known. This will involve telephoning/texting/emailing all parents/carers when contact hasn't been made
- There will be occasions when school staff visit homes when we have concerns about persistent or sporadic absence

#### **Outstanding Absences**

- Any outstanding or unexplained absence will be followed up by the Attendance Administration Assistant or HOL/SIT (Head of Learning / Senior Intervention teacher) via contact with parents/carers
- Until contact is made the absence will remain unauthorised

#### **Exit/Entry to School during the Day**

- Students who need to leave during the school day must bring a letter from home and/or an appointment card and present this to the Attendance Administration Assistant
- Students must sign out and sign back in at the Attendance Office on their return
- We would encourage all appointments to be made after 2.30pm so as not to impact on your child's learning

## Attendance Concerns

The Attendance Improvement Group will meet fortnightly to discuss attendance and punctuality concerns. During this meeting the attendance of all students will be tracked and the school's Attendance Intervention Protocol will be followed to ensure consistency across the whole school. The protocol has been developed around early intervention and constant communication with parents in order to maximise and maintain good attendance.

- **Medical Concerns and appointments** – we would ask that if there are concerns of a medical nature that would impact on the attendance of your child, can you make us aware of them as soon as possible. We will support any medical needs in line with the Managing Medical Needs Policy. We would encourage medical appointments to be made out of school hours at all times, but if this is not possible, we would encourage parents/carers to send their child to school both before and after the appointment.
- **Long term absence** – students who are long term absentees for whatever reason, often find the return to school problematical. There are both academic and social difficulties which students may need time to overcome. For some students this may involve a personalised re-integration programme. The programme will be devised by an appropriate member of staff and may include the use of a partial timetable and/or pastoral support from the behaviour support team, PSA or other member of staff. Parents/carers will be involved throughout the reintegration process and staff will be informed of the re-integration plan.
- **Leave of Absence Requests and Holiday Absence** – In relation to leave of absence requests, legislation makes it clear that parents do not have the right or entitlement to remove their children from school for the purpose of family holidays. If parents do choose to remove their child from their education provision and this absence is unauthorised, they may face a penalty fine of up to £120 per parent per child (if paid within 21 days of the notice, this fine can be reduced to £60). Applications for leave of absence during term time must be completed by the student's parents/carers (**request for leave during term time – this can be found on the school website**) and submitted to the Headteacher at least 4 weeks prior to the leave. The Headteacher will consider each application and make the decision based on the reasons given as to whether the request is in line with an 'exceptional circumstance' and whether to authorise or unauthorise the absence. Parents will be informed in writing within one week of their application.

## Rewards and Incentives

Outstanding attendance is acknowledged and rewarded throughout the year in a variety of ways. Details of the ways in which we will reward attendance are outlined in the Attendance Rewards Protocol. Attendance is monitored weekly and students achieving above year group targets are recognised. We are also keen to acknowledge the support of parents/carers in working with us to maximise outcomes for our young people.

## **Study leave**

We believe that students' needs are best met if they attend school every day in the period leading up to examinations. No study leave will be granted during this period, therefore, students will be expected to attend school in the usual way. Study leave will only be granted to Year 11 students during the time of the GCSE examination period, when the Year 11 personalised revision timetable starts. Should any student wish to attend school (or should their parents wish them to) on the days and at the times when they are not sitting examinations, arrangements will be made for them to do so. The school will work within the legal requirements ie.:

- Study leave should only be granted to Year 11 students and never to those in other year groups
- It should never exceed 15 school days in a year and is most appropriately granted during the examination period itself, ie not before the beginning of that period
- It should always be granted sparingly, taking account of the individual student's ability to manage and benefit from unsupervised study
- Any student has the right to attend school during study leave and a parent has the right to insist he/she does so
- Any sessions given to students as study leave has a statistical meaning of authorised absence (it is not an approved educational activity as it is unsupervised) and should be recorded and reported on by the school as such

## **Teenage pregnancy**

Support will be directed to keeping a student in school and wherever possible, her return to full-time education as soon as possible after the birth. A student who becomes pregnant should be allowed no more than 18 weeks' authorised absence immediately before and after the birth of the child. After that time, any absence should be treated as unauthorised.