

# Martin High School

*Inspiring all to dream more, learn more,  
do more and become more*



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Reviewed by: Head Teacher  
Policy Agreed at: Full Governing Body meeting  
Review date: May 2018

Signed: ..... (Head Teacher) Date: .....

Signed: ..... (Chair of Governors) Date: .....

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May 2017

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The aim of Martin High School's Attendance Policy is to enable the Academy to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils. Regular attendance at Martin High School is key to pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason we are dedicated to ensuring that our Attendance Policy is adhered to.

Martin High School takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the responsibility of parents, pupils, and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be.

- 90% attendance is equivalent to the loss of one grade and having half a day off each week.
- 80% attendance is equivalent to the loss of two grades and having one day off each week.

As well as lowering pupil grades, poor attendance may reduce further education and employment prospects.

We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead to poor attendance are given the appropriate support. However, by law, parents whose children are of compulsory school age and registered at school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they fail to do this, they are guilty of an offence and may be given a penalty notice or prosecuted under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

This policy is supported by our policies on **safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, and inclusion.**

### **Attendance Policy - Aims and Objectives**

- To achieve the school attendance level to above 95%;
- To reduce the level of unauthorised absence;
- Keep a register of the number of pupils who are persistently absent (85% and below);
- To continue to develop positive and consistent communication between home and school and in doing so provide support, advice, and guidance to parents and pupils;
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all stakeholders including parents, pupils, teachers and governors (Appendix 1);
- To continue to utilise a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data;
- To utilise the Star Awards system to recognise and celebrate good and improving attendance;
- To improve pupil's attainment through good attendance.

### **Authorised Absence**

Absences will be authorised by tutors during registration when a pupil presents the tutor with a valid reason and a note from their parent/carer. Absences will also be

authorised from contact via parents/carers and from replies to first day texting/emails using the appropriate codes on the system.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absence occurs when a pupil is absent and no explanation is provided by parents/carers or the explanation given is unacceptable to the school.

The school will ensure that parents/carers understand that it is their responsibility by law to make sure that their child attends school. This is done through the home-school agreement, regular newsletters home, at parent's/carers evenings, progress review days and at the induction evening for new pupils.

Parents/carers and pupils are reminded that punctuality is also their responsibility.

Absences not authorised within one week will be marked as unauthorised absences. Continual unauthorised absence will lead to a Fixed Penalty notice.

### **Leave of Absence during term-time**

From 1st October 2015 the school will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Government guidelines state "The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Parents/carers can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

If a Head of Year considers the request to be within the remit of "exceptional circumstances" they will discuss the request with the Head Teacher or Senior Leader with responsibility for Attendance, authorised by the Head Teacher to give final approval.

**Taking an annual family holiday during term time is not an example of exceptional circumstances and therefore will not be authorised by the school.**

If a parent takes their child on holiday in term-time without the Head Teacher's permission, this will be recorded as unauthorised holiday on the pupil's school attendance record. **If this absence exceeds 10 sessions (five school days) then the school will apply for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued in every case.**

If a pupil has not returned to school within 10 school days of the expected date of return, the Head Teacher may take the pupil off roll.

The school has a clear set of procedures that are followed if parents intend to take children out of school in term-time. This is to ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed and the school is fully aware of where a pupil is during term time.

- Parents/carers must complete a formal request form a minimum of **four weeks** prior to the expected absence (these forms are obtained from the respective Head of House (appendix 2))
- The form must be handed to the Head of House to make a decision on whether the parental request fulfils “exceptional circumstances”. This decision must be made in consultation with the Head Teacher/ Senior Leader with responsibility for Attendance.
- The Head of House will contact parents to discuss the request in every case to reinforce the expectation that leave of absence/holidays should not be taken during term time. If the request does not fulfil the criteria of “exceptional circumstances” the Head of House will make parents aware that the leave of absence/holiday will be classed as an unauthorised absence and that a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued if the absence exceeds 10 sessions (5 school days). This contact will be made within 5 days of the request form being handed into the school.
- Parents/carers are not entitled to ask for work to be set by teachers if the leave of absence/holiday is unauthorised by the school.
- Leave of absence request forms will be retained in the pupil’s file.

In the case of pupils who have recently arrived in Britain, special care will be taken to ensure that the policy has been clearly explained and understood during the induction process, taking into account that the parents’ first language may not be English and they may be unfamiliar with the education system in this country.

Parents/carers should be advised to time their holiday to overlap official school holidays.

### **Removing Pupils from Roll**

The school has a statutory duty to inform the local education authority of any pupil who fails to attend the school regularly or has been absent without the school’s permission for more than 10 days. For pupils who do not attend school for a period of 4 school weeks (20 consecutive days) and where reasonable enquiries have been made by the school, the pupil may be taken off roll. Pupils can also be removed from roll after a period of 20 days if they no longer live within reasonable distance of the school. The decision to remove a pupil from the school roll will be taken by the Head Teacher.

In this case a missing person’s report will be issued with respect to safeguarding the pupil. LA procedures and guidelines will be adhered to (Missing Children - Procedures and Protocols).

#### **Note:**

*Reasonable Enquiries - This is where the Senior Leader with responsibilities for attendance, the Head of Year, the Education Welfare Officer and/or external agencies cannot establish the whereabouts of a child and/or where the school or external agencies have made visits and have not seen the child on the visit(s); at the earliest possible moment this will trigger the LA ‘Missing Children - Procedures and Protocols’.*

## Procedures

### *Role of Parents and Carers*

- Ensure that your child arrives at school by 8.50am each day
- Ensure that your child only misses school for reasons that are unavoidable or justified, such as genuine illness or days of religious observance. Wherever practical, dental and medical appointments should be made outside of the school day
- Always notify school on the first morning of absence by contacting 0116 2363291
- Do not take holidays during term time
- Take an active interest in your child's school life and learning
- Ensure that your child goes to bed at an appropriate time
- Contact school to speak with the relevant Head of Year if you are concerned that your child is reluctant to attend
- Access up to date attendance data through Go4Schools

### *Whole school strategies:*

- Primary attendance data is collected and analysed when Year 7 join to ensure early intervention
- Registers are taken for all lessons
- Contact is made with parents on the first day of a pupil's absence via text/email or phone
- Letters are sent after absence if contact not made by parents
- Attendance figures are published on a weekly basis for staff and pupils
- Attendance figures are monitored each week by Assistant Head teacher (Safeguarding)
- Attendance figures are produced for Governing Body meetings
- Attendance figures are monitored termly and 100% attenders receive personal certificate and congratulation from Head Teacher at the end of the term and end of the year
- Attendance is linked into whole school rewards and house system
- Positive letters are sent to good attenders and letters of concern to poor attenders
- Target groups are identified (below 90% for Attendance Plan, below 85% Persistent Absentees for consideration for intervention via the Educational Welfare Officer)
- Targets are set for individuals by Tutor and for tutor groups by Head of House
- Attendance is recorded on each pupil's school report
- All discussions/meetings with parents include positive and negative impact of attendance on learning
- Pupils are given a chance to review their ongoing attendance rate during registration and tutor period
- Pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on their attendance rate and target during Parents Evenings and where necessary, they set/review personal attendance targets
- Attendance and Achievement is noted weekly in the staff and pupil notices
- Challenge lateness to school and issue sanctions in line with our behaviour policy

### *Role of Assistant Head teacher (Safeguarding):*

- Oversee, review and evaluate the whole school approach to attendance
- Advise and support the Educational Welfare Officer and Heads of House
- Monitor whole school attendance and punctuality figures (Individuals and target groups), compare data, last term, current term against last year's figures
- Present attendance figures and analyses of data for Leadership, Governing Body meetings and external agencies
- Co-ordinate certification process to reward good levels of attendance
- Agree and action any emerging Fixed Penalty Notices
- Agree "exceptional circumstance" leave of absence
- Collate information on interventions completed by the Pastoral Team
- Hold regular liaison meetings with Educational Welfare Officer and Head of House to discuss interventions for persistent absentees (85% and below)
- Be the home-school link, making home visits as appropriate to need

### *Role of Head of House*

- Advise on and implement whole school strategies for attendance
- Make attendance a priority issue within the year group through:
  - Staff Briefing with tutors
  - Regularly visiting tutor groups
  - Assemblies
  - Parents evenings, and Information evenings
  - Parental meetings
  - Liaison with Senior Leader responsible for attendance and pupil support and Sims Officer
- Monitor and act upon attendance and late lists daily
- Monitor and analyse year group's attendance (individually and target groups) and provide data analysis to Assistant Head Teacher (Safeguarding)
- Establish trigger points for direct intervention with individuals causing concern over attendance
  - Focussing on family trends
  - Direct contact with parents (through letters and meetings) at identified points
  - Focussing on pupils below 92% attendance who are in danger of becoming persistent absentees; ensuring that these pupils have an Attendance Support Plan in place
- Investigate causes of absence and plan strategies with tutors, parents, SENCO, School Nurse and Educational Welfare Officer as appropriate
- Ensure immediate contact is made with parents/carers if a pupil is suspected of truanting from school
- Co-ordinate and action parental contact by letter (in discussion with Senior leader responsible for attendance)
- Congratulate pupils on good/improved attendance and punctuality as appropriate
- Co-ordinate a plan for return of long-term absentees/truants, liaising with pupils, parents, teachers, Pastoral staff, SENCO and Careers/Connexions Advisor as appropriate to need
- Ensure pupils receive good/improved attendance letters/postcards

- Ensure that key members of staff are aware of low attenders, persistent absentees, truants etc. and issues that are impacting on the poor attendance of individuals
- Liaise with Assistant Head teacher (Safeguarding) other Heads of House, parents, staff, pupil support and Sims Officer and external agencies regarding extreme cases of absence and lateness as appropriate to need
- Lead and co-ordinate the setting of whole year group, tutor group and individual attendance targets in liaison with Assistant Head Teacher (Safeguarding)
- Contact and advise parents on taking extended leave in term time and liaise with Assistant Head teacher (Safeguarding) to gain advice on exceptional circumstances.

#### *Role of Subject Teacher:*

- Take a register each lesson. If ICT system is not working, a paper register must be taken to reception
- Plan work for pupils absent through medical issues, either to send home via reception or to assist on pupils' return
- Offer positive support to pupils when they return from absence
- Acknowledge pupil return from absence, support them with a realistic timescale to catch up on work missed
- Make the Admin colleagues in reception aware of any changes to class lists immediately
- Log truancy issues as a consequence on the school system and facilitate the consequence, as appropriate

#### *Role of Form Tutor:*

As the first point of contact with pupils, tutors are vital in promoting good attendance and punctuality

- Take a register each lesson. If ICT system is not working, a paper register must be taken and handed into the office
- Ask for explanations of absences from pupils on their return to school
- Follow up on a daily basis during registration
- Look out for any trends/patterns in a pupil's attendance record and inform the Head of House of any specific attendance concerns during briefing
- Inform Head of House of future known absences (e.g. hospital appointment, dental etc.)
- Discuss attendance figures with class on a weekly basis. Display weekly attendance figure on notice board in tutor room
- Use praise to reinforce good attendance and challenge lateness and poor attendance
- Discuss all lateness with individual pupils and emphasise the importance of punctuality.

On the return of pupils, tutors should encourage pupils to catch up with any missing work

#### *Role of Student Reception:*

- Contact parents by text/email/phone on the first day of absence
- Ensure registers are updated as appropriate

- Liaise daily with Heads of House about communication of absences and lates
- Liaise with Assistant Head Teacher (Safeguarding) to facilitate certificates for attendance
- Provide Leadership and Heads of House with weekly attendance figures - individual pupils and tutor group figures
- Ensure tutor group and year group attendance figures are published in the weekly student and staff notices.
- Liaise with Assistant Head Teacher (Enabling Learning) to facilitate certificates for attendance
- Generate attendance letters to be sent home to parents, under the direction of Directors of Learning

*Role of Admin Assistant:*

- Provide Leadership and Directors of Learning with weekly attendance figures - individual pupils and tutor group figures
- Ensure tutor group and year group attendance figures are published in the weekly pupil and staff notices
- Generate attendance letters to be sent home to parents, under the direction of Heads of House

**Appendices**

The following appendices support and develop this policy statement:

Appendix A. Legal information regarding attendance

Appendix B. SIMS/Lesson monitor registration procedures

Appendix C: Overview of roles and responsibilities

## **Appendix A: The legal situation regarding attendance**

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Any absence should be considered unauthorised unless there is a valid reason otherwise. Unauthorised absence at any level is considered unacceptable by both the college and local authority.

**DfE Guidance on leave during term time - June 2013, implemented September 2013** Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove reference to 'Family Holidays' and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. **There is no automatic right to any holiday in term time.**

Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school. Leave of absence must be requested from and agreed by the Head teacher in advance of any absence. If approved, the absence is registered as authorised and if not approved but still taken, as unauthorised.

The DfE guidance about holidays in term time makes the following points:

- Each request can only be judged on a case by case basis  
Even in exceptional circumstances it is expected that Head teachers will use their discretion sparingly
- Head teachers should not apply policies (for example, blanket bans) which might suggest that each application has not been considered on its individual merits
- As a general guide any activity, holiday or event that can be arranged during the annual 13-week holiday time should not be authorised during the school term

### **Penalties for unauthorised absence**

Amendments have been made to the 2007 penalty notices regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure that his/her children's regular attendance at school. The penalty is £60 for those who pay within 28 days and £120 for those who pay within 42 days. Parents who do not pay a fine within 42 days may be prosecuted.

**The Martin High School will follow the Leicestershire Code of Conduct (revised August 2013) which states that a Penalty Notice will be issued for unauthorised absences of 5 days or more.**

## Appendix B: SIMS/Lesson Monitor Registration Procedures

In this document, “Registration” refers to the act of recording a student’s presence or absence in lessons/sessions, and providing codes for absence from classes or engagement in different approved activities.

In statistics generated by the school, “registration” refers to the “official” register, which has two sessions, am and pm. The am mark corresponds to the period 1 session, and the pm mark is generated from the period 4 registration class register. **These registers are a legal requirement.**

Lesson by lesson registers, although not statutory, give the school scope to track attendance throughout the day, highlighting any internal unauthorised absence which should be dealt with by the Heads of House

### OUTLINE OF PROCEDURES

#### ***ALL PUPILS MUST BE REGISTERED AT MORNING (PERIOD 1) AND AFTERNOON (PERIOD 4) REGISTRATION***

A student who is not present in morning or afternoon registration should be marked [N]. A student who is late to morning or afternoon registration should be marked ‘L’ for Late and issued with a detention punctuality slip.

If the register has already been taken, staff should ensure that any student who arrives after 8.50 am signs in at Reception and registers will be updated accordingly.

Staff should only register as present those students WHO ARE ACTUALLY PRESENT IN THE ROOM. PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE A STUDENT UNMARKED - mark either Present [/], Absent [N], or Late [L].

If a student is absent for a reason known in advance, it is likely that the reception staff will have pre-entered a code into the system. Class teachers should not change this code unless the student is present (e.g. cancelled appointment, felt well so came back to school etc.). Subject teachers should enter a comment in the comments box if this is the case.

**It is important to remember that the college authorises absences, not the parent.** This makes decisions by the school regarding the authorisation of absences crucial. ***If you are not satisfied with reasons given for absence, you should not authorise the absence without discussion with the Head of House.***

### NOTES FOR TEACHERS - DEALING WITH ABSENCES AND LATENESS

It is the school’s responsibility to monitor students’ attendance and to inform the Local Authority of students who do not attend regularly or who are ‘missing from education’ (e.g. moved from the area with no known forwarding address).

## **ABSENCES**

- On each day of absence, a text message will be generated by the front office
- Following a response Lesson Monitor will be re-coded appropriately
- Our clear expectation of all students and their parents is that, if a student is absent from school then the absence **MUST** be explained by letter/phone call/email/text message from a parent/carer
- It is not the responsibility of the tutor to spend time chasing up attendance, but tutors should ask students for notes from parents and send the attendance team to re-code Lesson Monitor where appropriate and monitor students' attendance for concerns, informing the Heads of House /attendance Support Officer, as necessary

## **LATENESS**

1. Students arriving at school after 8.50 am (i.e. having missed registration at the start of Period 1) must report to Reception to sign in, then go to their lesson as soon as possible.

The class register must then be updated and sent to the system (student marked "L" for late).

2. Lateness will be monitored through SIMS. Students who are late to school will be dealt with by the Heads of House and placed in break time detentions.
3. Students who arrive late to school through no fault of their own (e.g. late bus) should report to Reception prior to arriving in their class. When arriving in class, teachers should mark the student as late. This coding will subsequently be amended by the reception team, when it has been substantiated that a bus arrived late.

## **EXPECTATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

1. Our clear expectation is that all students should be in their tutor room at 8.50 am for morning registration. Any student arriving in the classroom after 8.50 am is LATE for am registration.
2. All Lateness should initially be recorded using the [L] code. If the lateness is later found to be due to an acceptable reason, (e.g. doctor/dentist appointment), confirmed by letter from home/phone call, and then the [L] is to be replaced with an appropriate code.

## **LEAVING SCHOOL AFTER REGISTRATION**

Students leaving school during the school day must sign out. This is a vital safety procedure.

Pupils can only leave the site during lesson time for a pre-arranged appointment if they have written permission from a parent to visit the doctor etc. They must inform the tutor and sign out in person at Reception.

Students who feel ill during the school day should report to class, and request to go to Reception. When they report to Reception, a decision will be made if parents should be called; this is the responsibility of the reception staff, pupils should **not** call home.

## Appendix C: Attendance overview of roles and responsibilities

<b>Pupil</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrive at school on time</li> <li>• Attend school every day</li> <li>• Attend all lessons</li> <li>• Arrive to all lessons on time</li> </ul>
<b>Parent / Carer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure child attends school on time, every day.</li> <li>• Make appointments outside of school hours, wherever possible (e.g. Doctors, Dentist, etc.)</li> <li>• Contact the school to explain any absence and notify, in advance, of planned absences for appointments</li> </ul>
<b>Reception Team, Student Support Admin, Attendance Admin, Supported by HOH and SLT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the importance of good attendance to parents and pupils through displays and articles in the newsletter</li> <li>• Oversee accurate completion of registers and refer pupils that have truanted to the Heads of House</li> <li>• Inform parents of absence and follow up as appropriate</li> <li>• Work with pupils and parents to identify reasons for absence from school and/or individual lessons</li> </ul>
<b>Tutors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend registration on time (8.50am and 1.10pm)</li> <li>• Take an accurate register at the start of the day. Pupils absent for registration should be marked N</li> <li>• Pupils late for registration, without a valid reason, should be issued with a late slip informing them of a break time detention</li> <li>• Monitor attendance and punctuality to registration and alert Heads of House of any issues</li> <li>• Work with pupils and parents to identify and challenge, if appropriate, reasons for absence</li> <li>• Support pupils back into school/lessons and help them to catch up with work that has been missed</li> <li>• Model good patterns of attendance and punctuality</li> </ul>
<b>Teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend all lessons on time</li> <li>• Take an accurate register within the first 10 minutes of each lesson</li> <li>• Pupils late for a lesson, without a valid reason, should be marked as late and issued with a detention</li> <li>• Email reception if any pupil is present in school but absent from your lesson</li> <li>• Work with pupils and parents to identify reasons for missing lessons – refer to lesson attendance in full reports, if appropriate.</li> <li>• Support pupils to catch up after a prolonged absence</li> <li>• Model good patterns of attendance and punctuality</li> </ul>
<b>Subject Leaders / Heads of Faculty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor attendance within subject area(s) / Faculty</li> <li>• Evaluate the impact of attendance on achievement</li> <li>• Develop and maintain a support programme for pupils whose attendance is impacting on achievement</li> </ul>
<b>Heads of House</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with primary schools to identify year 6 pupils with attendance issues and contact home prior to starting at the school</li> <li>• Promote the importance of good attendance to parents and pupils through displays, articles in the newsletter and assemblies</li> <li>• Monitor attendance of individuals, groups and whole school. Share data with stakeholders regularly, Including: weekly tutor % / PA% / SLT reports</li> <li>• Provide support, advice and guidance for re-integration back into school</li> <li>• Reward pupils for 100% and improved attendance</li> <li>• Case work pupils who are Persistently Absent (PA)</li> <li>• Prepare cases for referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)</li> <li>• Liaise with teaching staff, SLT and governors in designing and implementing strategies to improve attendance</li> <li>• Demonstrate clear evidence in MEP</li> </ul>
<b>SLT &amp; Governors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for monitoring progress towards targets for improving attendance and reducing numbers of PA pupils</li> <li>• Responsible for monitoring the progress towards closing the gap of attendance of vulnerable groups e.g. PP, SEND</li> <li>• Responsible for monitoring frequency and impact of interventions</li> <li>• AHT has strategic lead on attendance</li> </ul>

