




**MOUNT HOUSE  
SCHOOL**

**INSPIRING EVERY INDIVIDUAL**

**SCHOOL POLICIES**

**ATTENDANCE**

<b>Review</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>By</b>
<b>Current Review</b>	<b>September 2024</b>	
<b>Next Review</b>	<b>September 2025</b>	

## Principles

We are committed to building a culture of good school attendance and punctuality, by recognising:

- the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life;
- the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting students with medical conditions and / or disabilities, mental health issues, safeguarding wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students;
- the importance of setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students and communicating these regularly and effectively to students and parents;
- that attendance is never "solved" and is a continuous process requiring revision and updating of messages, processes and strategies; and
- children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and that parents promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

The School recognises that improving attendance is a school leadership issue and has assigned one of the Senior Leadership Team in the School to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in the School. The School recognises the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. This is an integral part of the School's ethos and culture.

## Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#);
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#);
- DfE Guidance (from 19<sup>th</sup> Aug 2024, this is statutory guidance): [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#);
- [Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance](#) (DfE, September 2023);
- [School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures](#) (DfE, May 2020);
- [Guidance for parents on school attendance](#) (Office of the Children's Commissioner, September 2023);
- ['Is my child too ill for school?' guidance](#) (NHS, April 2024);
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#) (DfE, February 2023);
- [Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#) (DfE, February 2023);
- DfE (Sept 2024) 'Keeping children safe in education (2024)'
- Guidance published by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI); and
- Advice published by Barnet Local Authority, regarding school attendance – [School attendance | Barnet Council](#)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Procedure Policy

- Safeguarding Policy
- Student Supervision, Lost, Missing and absent Children Policy

### **Requirements**

- Poor attendance and punctuality may indicate a safeguarding concern. Please see our Safeguarding Policy for more details.
- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives an efficient, full-time education suited to their age, aptitude and any special educational need. They must therefore make sure their child attends school regularly and arrives on time.
- Regular attendance at Mount House is vitally important for a student's all-round development. It is important that staff, parents and students are familiar with the Attendance Policy and the procedures operating at school.
- Poor attendance undermines students' academic attainment and progress and sometimes puts students at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.
- Students who are absent for any reason are expected to complete missed work. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and complete assignments.
- Should a student be excluded for any reason, the school will ensure that appropriate work is set for completion.
- All work missed by absence, for whatever reason, is due in on the day the student returns to school.
- Students showing patterns of non-attendance or with any unauthorised absence, where it is clear that the absences could be a sign of early truanting, will be subject to immediate consequences and parents will be called into the school. Consequences may range from a student being placed in detention to the student's parents being reported to the appropriate authorities.

### **Registration and Absence**

- Registers are taken for both morning and afternoon sessions and Mount House School will telephone parents should there be unexplained absence about which the school has not been notified. Attendance registers are kept for a period of no less than six years after the date on which the entry was made.
- In addition to the statutory required registrations, all lessons are registered using ISAMS.
- Parents who require leave of absence must write to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) requesting permission, using the appropriate form, which is found on the school website. Absences for such things as family holidays are not acceptable and parents should not expect these to be approved.
- Senior members of the pastoral team will monitor attendance and will always investigate the reasons for absence of any student with a significant record of absence, with less than 90% attendance causing significant concern and less than 85% causing serious concern.
- Student absences at the start of the school year present a skewed proportion, so their seriousness will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account previous attendance.

### **Safeguarding and attendance**

The DSL ensures the following safeguarding-related procedures:

- Following up unexplained absences of any child with a telephone call from the school on the morning of the first day of absence.
- Notifying social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a student who is on the child safeguarding register.
- Notifying the local authority when a child moves to a new school at any point during their time at the school.

- Notifying the local authority when children are added to the school roll.
- The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:
  - Children in Need
  - Looked After Children
  - Students with English as Additional Language
  - Students with Special Educational Needs and Disability

### **Attendance expectations**

Attendance is mandatory for all students. This means the usual rules on school attendance (as set out in the main body of this policy) will apply, including:

- The parents' duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
- The school's accountability for the education and safeguarding of the students on its roll. It has a responsibility to record attendance and follow up periods of absence in line with the procedures set out in the main body of this policy.
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices guided by the LA's code of conduct.

### **Reluctance to return to school**

The school will remind parents of their legal duty to ensure their child attends school, and parents will be advised to contact the school if they have concerns about their child returning to school.

If a parent raises a concern, a relevant staff member will hold a discussion with the parent to discuss their concerns and provide reassurance on the measures that are in place to reduce risk in the school.

### **Monitoring and administering attendance**

The School will have robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups in order to identify students at risk of non-attendance and those who are persistently absent; and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.

Where there are challenges to attendance, the School will work effectively and respectfully with students, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them.

The School will respond to non-attendance and / or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding and behaviour policies and the School's terms and conditions. It will act in a proportionate and targeted way in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed.

Parents are bound by the terms relating to conduct and attendance in the parent contract/Terms and Conditions, and failure to ensure a child's attendance or engage with the School about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the parent is treating the School unreasonably. There is therefore an expectation for parents to work with the School to resolve student attendance issues, attending meetings with the school and to work with the local authority and any outside agencies should this be deemed necessary to support/resolve high levels of absence. In certain circumstances, the School may use an Attendance Contract with the Student/Parent to support improving attendance.

### **Students at risk of persistent absence**

The school will ensure it provides support to students at risk of persistent absence, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary. In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing persistent absence, the SLT will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Mentoring students
  - Communicating with parents
  - Regularly reviewing attendance figures and producing actions to address concerns
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams and Early Help / MASH where necessary.

Where a student becomes at risk of persistent absence, the school will:

- Welcome the student back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meet with the student to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Provide check-in opportunities to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with the student's parents to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

Where a student at risk of persistent absence is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the student in line with the school's duty of care.

### **Children Missing (who are absent from) Education**

Children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the school's response to persistently absent students and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent students, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. Being absent repeatedly may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going completely missing from education in future.

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation with the Head.

Where a child is Missing from Education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the School has failed to find them.
- The family has notified the School that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (student file) has been requested by another school.

Please see the DfE Guidance [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance).

### **Additional Needs**

The School recognises some students may find it harder than others to attend school, and will work with those students and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Suitable strategies will also be considered for students with any social, emotional (emotionally-based schools avoidance or EBSA) or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance.

Where barriers are outside of the School's control, the School will work with parents and students to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for early help.

### **Information sharing and Confidentiality**

Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education.

The School, local authorities and other local partners should work jointly and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to a student (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familiar harms).

Where appropriate, the School is expected to inform a student's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences.

The information created in connection with this Attendance Policy may contain personal data. The School's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The School has a published Data Privacy Notice on its website which explain how the School will use personal data.

### **Further Information**

Parents and students should carefully read and sign any documentation received from Mount House School relating to conduct and attendance, and are required to work closely with the school to support good attendance as a preparation for the world of work and lifelong learning.

Our website <https://www.mounthouse.org.uk/> is updated daily, and this policy and other relevant material is published there.

School emergency closures for such things as extreme weather will also be published on the home page of our website, Instagram and via email (School Comms).

For any contact regarding non-attendance, please telephone 0208 449 6889 or email [reception@mounthouse.org.uk](mailto:reception@mounthouse.org.uk). The school reception and form tutor must be notified in advance of any medical/dental appointments or other planned absence from school by completing the following form (<https://www.mounthouse.org.uk/absence-request-webform/>) and emailing in the relevant evidence to reception.