



MERCHANT TAYLORS'

Prep

Attendance and Absence Policy

This Attendance and Absence of Pupils Policy applies to the EYFS (including Wrap-Around Care), and all other year groups at Merchant Taylors' Prep. This policy is written with due regard to [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (Aug 2024), which governs our practice in this area.

Rationale

Regular attendance at School is critical for ensuring that pupils are able to meet their full potential. It is the responsibility of the School, families, and (to an age-appropriate degree) pupils themselves to encourage attendance at every possible school session, and to monitor pupils whose attendance has become, is becoming, or risks becoming poor, to provide timely and effective intervention to improve their attendance.

1. The responsibilities of the School

- Merchant Taylors' Prep expects and encourages pupils to attend school regularly, to arrive on time and to be equipped and ready to learn.
- The School encourages and acknowledges good attendance and punctuality.
- The School communicates a clear attendance policy to pupils, parents and staff; the policy is available on the website.
- Attendance is recorded by registration twice daily and in accordance with the guidelines contained in this policy document, which are informed by [Working together to improve school attendance](#). This creates the Attendance Register, which is the first register which the School must maintain.
- The School also maintains a second register, the Admissions Register (the School Roll).
- Patterns of attendance are monitored to inform future practice, as regards both individuals and cohorts of pupils.
- Unexplained and unjustified absences and patterns of absence are investigated and challenged in a timely manner.
- The School works closely with parents should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern, to resolve any issues. This involves helping parents and pupils to identify and mitigate any barriers to attendance.
- The School works closely with parents and pupils when their absence is related to physical or mental health, and special educational needs and/or disabilities, and with young carers and those with a social worker. The School pays due regard to the individual needs of pupils and their families and their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The School designates a member of SLT to be a Senior Attendance Champion.

2. The responsibilities of parents and pupils

- Pupils will co-operate with their parents to ensure they attend school regularly and on time.
- Pupils will be punctual to lessons.
- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis.
- Parents should ensure that pupils arrive at school punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents have a responsibility to work with the School and other agencies, including but not limited to the NHS and the Local Authority in which the child lives, to address poor pupil attendance or punctuality should it occur.

3. The role of the Local Authority

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act and the National Framework for Penalty Notices, the Local Authority in which the child resides does not issue fines for non-attendance of pupils at independent schools such as MTP. The Local Authority may however use other powers, including prosecution, when parents fail to ensure a child is in education.

The School has a duty to notify the Local Authority in which the child resides, and the Hertfordshire Local Authority (in which the School is situated) when a pupil fails to attend school regularly, or is absent without leave for more than 10 continuous school days, or after 20 school days of unauthorised absence.

The School has a duty to notify Hertfordshire and the Local Authority in which the child resides when a pupil is deleted from the Admission Register for the following reasons: when the pupil has been taken out of school to be home educated; when the family has apparently moved away; when the pupil has been certified as medically unfit to attend; when the child is in custody for more than four months; when the pupil has been permanently excluded; and when pupils leave the School at a non-standard transition point (that is, at any time except at the end of the School's most senior year). This is a Deletion Return.

The School has a duty to notify Hertfordshire and the Local Authority in which the child resides when a pupil is added to the Admission Register. This takes the form of a New Pupil Return and must be done within 5 days of a pupil joining the school *except* when the pupil joins the school at the start of the School's most junior year (Nursery).

4. Attendance at MTP: day-to-day

The School day begins at 08.30 (Years 3-8), 08.40 (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) and 09.00 (Nursery). An initial attendance register is taken as soon as is practical at the start of the day, typically within the first five minutes.

Pupils who arrive at the Prep site (Years 1 to 8) after registration is taken must sign in using the electronic InVentry system in the main office. Pupils in Nursery or Reception who arrive late must ring the bell at the Manor. Morning registers close at 09.45.

The core part of the School day ends at 3.00 (Nursery), 3.20 (Reception), 3.30 (Years 1 and 2), 3.45 (Years 3 and 4) and 4.15 (Years 5 to 8).

5. Absence

5.1. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is absence with permission from the Head or other authorised member of the teaching staff. This includes instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided (e.g. illness).

Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from the Head or other authorised member of the teaching staff. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

5.2.1 Permission for absence (in advance)

Permission for absence should be sought by parents in advance of the absence, whenever possible, via an email addressed to the Head (for an absence of a whole day or more) or to the appropriate Head of Section (the Head of Pre-Prep or the Senior Deputy Head). This email should be sent to office@mtpn.org.uk. Extensions of the holiday periods should not be requested. Absence from School disrupts a pupil's study and in most subjects it is not possible to make up for missed lessons, particularly in oral work and practical subjects. Work will not be provided during a pupil's avoidable absence from school.

Parents are strongly encouraged to book routine medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

5.2.2 Notification of absence (on the day)

When absence is unexpected (for example because the pupil is unwell), parents must contact the School Office first thing in the morning, and certainly by 8.30 a.m., by telephone or email, with the reason for their son's absence. Parents must make this contact themselves. Messages sent via friends, au pairs etc., do not fulfil our legal requirements.

If a pupil is unwell, and it is clear that they will be unable to return to School the following day (because, for example, they have a high temperature), then please say so when calling or emailing. We do otherwise need confirmation for each day of absence.

5.3 Other matters concerning absence

When pupils leave the school premises, for medical appointments etc, during the day, they must first report to the office, sign themselves out and then sign back in again on their return. With pupils who do not normally have permission to leave the premises without an adult, parents are required to sign them in and out.

In most circumstances, if a pupil is fit enough to attend school, we expect them to take part in Games or P.E. lessons. A letter must be sent to the Director of Sport if a medical condition prevents them from doing so.

In the event of prolonged absence caused by illness or other unavoidable circumstances, when a pupil is able to complete work at home without detriment to his recovery, work may be collected from the School Office by arrangement with the Form Tutor, or may be set online.

6. Unexplained absence procedure

If the School has not heard from the Parent by 9.00am a telephone call will be made home, usually by a teaching assistant. This procedure is to ensure the safety and welfare of the pupils. The School needs to know that, if the child is not on school premises, he is with his parents or another authorised carer.

If the pupil's whereabouts cannot be ascertained, further measures will be taken including but not limited to using email contacts, contacting other emergency contacts and involving the Local Authority.

7. The Attendance Register

All pupils on the Admission Register must appear on the Attendance Register.

7.1 Procedure for taking the Attendance Register

The attendance register must be taken at the beginning of each morning session and once during the afternoon session and show whether each registered pupil at the school is present, absent, present at an approved educational activity, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances as set out in the Regulations. Registers are important documents and must be kept safe as they may be called in evidence in legal proceedings. They may be the only record of who was on site in the event of an emergency such as a fire.

The register must indicate:

- Whether the absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised;
- Whether a pupil is attending an approved, supervised off-site educational activity and the nature of the activity; and
- When a pupil is unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance, the nature of that circumstance.

Schools are required to use the national Absence and Attendance Codes to record in the attendance register the attendance of pupils whose names are on the admissions register. Attendance and absence data is collected via the School Census using these codes.

The register must clearly show the original entry and:

- Any amendments
- The reason for the amendments
- Who made the amendments
- When the amendment was made
- Why it was made

Schools must keep the back-up copies of computerised registers or hard copies of manual registers (for both the admission and attendance registers) once a month for at least three years from the date of each entry. The Governing Body must make both the computerised register, and additional back-up copies, available to school inspectors. Anyone authorised to inspect the registers may also take extracts, but these may only be taken for the purpose of their functions under the Education Acts.

On a day-to-day basis it is the responsibility of teachers to maintain up-to-date registers. Staff must:

- Use the correct codes to indicate presence or absence (see Appendix 1).
- Monitor the attendance of pupils in their own forms using their personal knowledge of the pupil to provide insight which can be passed on to their Head of House or Section.

The Attendance Register is managed using ISAMS.

7.2 Procedure for checking the attendance register is correctly filled out

Daily

Registration TAs check that all registers are taken, morning and afternoon. They then check for any missing pupils, beginning with a visual check and then moving to the procedure shown in section 6 of this document.

If Registration TAs are unable to locate pupils they will be assisted by Office Staff and then middle and senior managers as needed.

Weekly

The ISAMS Administrator and the Senior Deputy Head check the registers on at least a weekly basis, looking to ensure:

- That Registration TAs' work is complete and all registers are present.
- That 'N' codes have been updated in the register in a timely fashion.
- That explanatory notes are provided when required and that they match the registration code offered.
- Anomalies are investigated and corrected.

Monthly

The ISAMS Administrator reviews this work on a monthly basis, and prints (electronically and physically) and securely stores both registers.

8. The Admission Register (School Roll)

An Admissions Register must contain an index in alphabetical order of all the pupils that attend school and, in relation to each pupil, the following information:

- Full name
- Sex
- The name and address of every person known to the school to be a parent of the pupil (and an indication of which parent the pupil normally lives with and which parents hold parental responsibility).
- The address at which the pupil lives (if not with one of the parents).
- Telephone numbers of both parents in case of emergency (with an additional emergency contact in the case of only one parent).
- Date of birth
- The date of admission or readmission
- The name and address of the school the pupil last attended, if any.
- The name of the destination school (or additional school, in the case of dual registration) notified by a parent and the first date of attendance, where it is reasonably practicable to ascertain this information.

A pupil must be placed on the Admission Register immediately prior to their first day of school and removed at the end of their final term, or in the circumstances shown in Section 3 of this document.

The Admission Register is managed using ISAMS.

9. Promoting and maintaining excellent attendance

It is the responsibility of all members of the School community to promote and maintain excellent attendance. This is co-ordinated and led by the School Attendance Champion, who is the Senior Deputy Head, Tony McConnell. The School Attendance Champion can be contacted via office@mtpn.org.uk. The School Attendance Champion's functions (but not their oversight) are devolved through the normal school systems to Heads of Section, Heads of House and form or class teachers.

The School Attendance Champion regularly reviews attendance looking for patterns within and without particular cohorts, and engages with colleagues appropriately to seek strategies to address any issues which affect particular groups of people.

Working with form and class teachers and Heads of Section and Heads of House, the School Attendance Champion also monitors individual pupils with poor or potentially poor attendance, working alongside those who know the pupil and family best to form strategies to support them.

As appropriate, this will involve working with the SENDICO, School Nurse, and Designated Safeguarding Lead. Through those professionals and in partnership with the family the School might liaise external services such as educational psychologists, NHS Direct, CAMHS, the Local Authority Safeguarding and Child Protection Team, etc.

The individual needs and rights of the child must remain paramount, including the right to an education.

Nature of concern about individual's attendance	Staff in charge of resolving	Example actions
Unexplained absence	Registration TA and form tutor	Phone call, follow up email
Unexplained absence which remains unexplained	Head of House/Head of Section	Investigation, parental contact
Beginning of a pattern of absence	Form tutor with Head of House/Section aware	Work with pupil and parents
Established but low-level pattern of absence	Head of House/Section with School Attendance Champion aware	Consideration of all factors around the child. Other colleagues brought in.
Established pattern of absence (<95%)	School Attendance Champion	Parental meeting to form action plan
Established pattern of serious absence (<90%)	School Attendance Champion with Head aware	Involvement of other agencies as needed

This review was an extraordinary review prompted by a major change in guidance.

Reviewed: September 2024 (Senior Deputy Head)

Date of next Review: November 2024

Appendix 1: National attendance codes as used at MTP

See also p.80 of [Working together to improve school attendance](#).

1. In form time or class registration

Code	Meaning	Notes	Entered by
/	Present am	Pupil here, or an adult has seen them & knows where they are now on site . (Manor, MTP, MTS)	Form Tutor (FT) /teacher (who is present with students)
\	Present pm		
N	Absent (unknown)	Pupil not here, no prior warning. Must be resolved within 5 days.	
L	Late a.m.	After a.m. reg. period ends and before 09.45 (has signed in at Office)	FT/teacher/Office if after reg ends.

2. Not present – individual

Code	Meaning	Notes	Entered by	Authorised by
P	Approved Sporting activity	Fixture –ONLY sport	Office/ Register TA/ DoS	SLT when calendar confirmed
V	Approved Educational Visit	(and under supervision of school staff)	Office/ Register TA	Head of Section
I	Illness	Unexpectedly ill: parent has contacted, or Reg TA phoned.	FT/Office/ Register TA	Whoever is in contact w/parent.
M	Medical apt	Medical or dental appointment notified by parent	Office or Reg TA. On Fut. Abs if notified.	Head of Section if part day; Head - if notified. Else Office or Reg TA.
R	Religious absence	Day of observation in parent's religion	Office or Reg TA	Office or Reg TA.
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	Acceptable 'other' absence: parent has phoned or emailed, or Reg TA has phoned in response to absence. (e.g compassionate)	FT/Office/ Reg TA	Whoever receives call or email or makes call, but with reference to SLT if needed.
J1	Interview	Visit to future schools notified by parent, incl. tests	Office. On Future Absences	Office – refer to Head of Section if needed
B	Taster day or other approved educational activity	Is at another school but it's not an interview (pre or post offer). Is not with our staff (that would be a V)	Office. On Future Absences	Office – refer to Head of Section if needed
Z	Pupil not yet on register	Try to avoid this but can use a 'Z' to ease admin	SLT	SLT

3. Not present - group

Code	Meaning	Notes	Entered by	Authorised by
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Local, national or international level	Registration TA	Senior Deputy Head, Head of Pre-Prep
Y3	Site partly closed	Unexpected	Registration TA	SLT
Y4	Site completely closed	Unexpected	Registration TA	SLT
#	Planned whole school closure	Can use this for Inset, half-terms etc but preferable to exclude them from term calendar	Isams Admin	SLT

4. Rarely used – refer to SLT if necessary

Code	Meaning	Notes	Entered by	Authorised by
C1	Regulated performance or work	Performance or work but only if authorised in a specific way: refer to guidance	SLT/Head's PA	SLT
Y6	Absent for public health reasons	Used if public health guidance prevents attendance, typically because the pupil is recovered from an infection but still infectious.	Nurse/SLT	With medical advice
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	If permanently excluded, remains until they are removed from the school roll.	Head's PA	Head
Y7	Unavoidable – other	Must relate to the PUPIL's circumstances not the parent's.	Office or Reg TA	Refer to SLT if needed.

5. Other authorised codes which should only be used in exceptional circumstances include X, T, S, W, K,C2, D, Q, Y1, Y5

6. Unauthorised absence:

Code	Meaning	Notes	Entered by
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Holiday cannot be retrospectively authorised.	SLT/Head's PA
O	Reason unknown	We cannot establish reason for absence	SLT
U	Present very late	Pupil arrived later than 09.45 with no other reason for absence	SLT/ Reg TA

Note for 2024: colleagues should note that:

1. 'C' now covers more than it did, including the entirety of the 'A' and 'H' codes as were; both are now abolished.
2. 'J' is replaced by 'J1', and that's just for an interview. A taster day is 'B' which is a broadening of that code. J is defunct.
3. 'P' is now only sport, not music.
4. Widespread travel disruption is now 'Y2' not 'T'
5. Whole school closure is now unambiguously 'Y4'.
6. Part school closure (i.e. one site is inaccessible) is now unambiguously 'Y3'.