



## 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.

This policy incorporates our Children Missing Education Policy (see in particular Sections 3, 6, 9). It should be read in conjunction with the School's Safeguarding Policy.

#### 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.
- Parents must ensure that they notify the School promptly should there be a change in circumstances such as the pupil's address.

## 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 the Hertfordshire Local Authority when the School has reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will miss 15 days, consecutively or cumulatively, because of illness, in an academic year.

We are aware that children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect, and those absent from education are at a greater risk of abuse. When this is suspected the School will follow local child protection procedures as stated in the School's Safeguarding Policy, which may take precedence over the procedures set out in above and in sections 6, 8 and 9 of this policy. Where a child is deemed to be at risk of missing education, or to have become a Child Missing Education, the School will refer the matter to the Local Authority Children Missing Education officer on 01992 556867.

The School has a duty to notify Hertfordshire Local Authority 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. Hertfordshire has also asked to be notified when pupils leave at standard points (that is, the end of the School's most senior year). This is a **Deletion Return**. The contents of a Deletion Return are specified in *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (para220) and specified by Hertfordshire on the Deletion Return form on their attendance portal. The information on a Deletion Return is broadly the same as that on the Admissions Register (see Section 8).

The School has a duty to notify Hertfordshire 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 at a non-standard entry point. Hertfordshire has also asked to be notified when pupils join at standard points... The New Pupil Return can also be found on Hertfordshire's attendance portal.

## 4. Attendance at MTP: day-to-day

The School day begins at 08.30 (Years R-8), 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. Parents of 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 15.00 (Nursery), 15.20 (Reception), 15.30 (Years 1 and 2), 15.45 (Years 3 and 4) and 16.15 (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 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 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 . sent to [office@mtpn.org.uk](mailto:office@mtpn.org.uk) and addressed as follows

Length of expected absence for which permission is sought	Person from whom to request permission
More than three days, or any absence for travel	Head
One to three days	Head of Key Stage – Head of Pre-Prep (YN-2) or Senior Deputy Head (Y3-8)
Part of a day	Head of Section (YN-4) or House (Y5&6)

Should absence be sought for a pair of siblings in different sections, parents are asked to address the request to both section leads, who will work together to coordinate their response via the Office, and should permission be given, to ensure the absence is noted on the register.

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 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 08.30 ., 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.

If a pupil is fit enough to attend school, we generally expect them to take part in Games and P.E. 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 their recovery, work may be collected from the School Office by arrangement with the Form Tutor, or it may be set online.

## **6. Unexplained absence procedure**

If the School has not heard from the Parent by 09.00 a telephone call will be made home, usually by a teaching assistant or member of the office staff. This procedure is to ensure the safety and welfare of the pupils. The School needs to know that a child who is not on school premises is safe.

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. It is reasonable to expect that, should the School remain unable to ascertain the pupil's whereabouts, the School and Local Authority will check with agencies such as Youth Justice Services, Children's Social Care and other similar services if known to be involved with the family, UK Border Force, UK Visas and Immigration, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and, in the case of children of service personnel, with the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service. Home visits may also be made, including making enquiries with neighbours. These checks will be recorded.

## **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 is 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 are 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) for at least three years from the date of each entry. These records must be updated once a month during term time. 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 and office staff 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 set out in section 6 of this document.

If Registration TAs and office staff are unable to locate pupils they will be assisted by other members of the office staff and then middle and senior leaders 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.
- That anomalies are investigated and corrected.

### Monthly

The ISAMS Administrator reviews this work on a monthly basis during term time, and prints (electronically and physically) and securely stores both registers on the last teaching day of each month.

## **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 there being 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 intended 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 the first day on which the pupil is registered to attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date the School will make reasonable enquiries to establish the pupil's whereabouts and will notify the Local Authority if unable to do so satisfactorily. The pupil is removed from the Admission Register at the end of their final term, or in the circumstances shown in Section 3 of this document ('Deletion Return').

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](mailto: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 pupils.

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 Head of Learning Support, 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.

<b>Nature of concern about individual's attendance</b>	<b>Staff in charge of resolving</b>	<b>Example actions</b>
Unexplained absence	Registration TA, office staff, 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% over a term)	School Attendance Champion	Parental meeting to form action plan
Established pattern of serious absence (<90% over a term)	School Attendance Champion with Head aware	Involvement of other agencies as needed
Beginning of a pattern of lateness to school	Form tutor	Investigation, parental contact
Regular pattern of lateness to school	Head of House/Section, Assistant Head (Pastoral)	Work with pupil and parents
Persistent lateness, or regular extreme lateness	School Attendance Champion with Head aware	Parental meeting to form action plan

**Reviewed: November 2025 (Senior Deputy Head)**

**Date of next Review: May 2027 (or when statutory guidance is amended)**

## 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 <b>an adult</b> has seen them & knows where they are now <b>on site</b> . (Manor, MTP, MTS).	Form Tutor (FT) /teacher (who is present with students)
\	Present pm		
N	Absent (unknown)	Pupil not here, no prior warning. <b>Must be resolved within 5 days.</b>	
L	Late a.m.	After a.m. reg. is taken 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	<b>Fixture</b> – 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 Key Stage
I	Illness	<b>Unexpectedly</b> ill: parent has contacted, or Reg TA or office staff 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.	<b>Head of House/Section if part day; Head of Key Stage if longer - if notified.</b> 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 or office have 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	Interview at 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 (J1) or Open Day (C). Is not with MTP staff (V) or at a sports fixture (P).	Office. On Future Absences	Head of Key Stage
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
Y3	Site partly closed	E.g. just the Manor or just the Prep site.	Registration TA/Office	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	Senior Deputy Head

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 a satisfactory reason for absence.	SLT
U	Present very late	Pupil arrived later than 09.45 with no other reason for absence.	SLT/ Reg TA