



**The Manor**  
Preparatory School

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Date Policy Reviewed	1 September 2023
Date of Next Review	1 September 2024
Person(s) responsible for review	SLT (Deputy Head Pastoral / Head)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Manor Preparatory School aims to provide an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to strive for excellence.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important, therefore, that parents make sure that their child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this. Where this Policy refers to 'you' or 'your', this refers to parents of children attending The Manor Preparatory School.

### 2. WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will significantly affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Children are also best safeguarded from exploitation and other risks in the wider community by attending school regularly, where they are supervised by qualified and caring professionals.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

This policy works to meet the mandatory requirements laid out in the Government guidance document: ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#).

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility: parents, pupils and all members of school staff. To help us focus on this, when academic reports are sent out, your child's attendance and punctuality record will be included.

### **3. STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR ATTENDANCE**

Those staff responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

- Mr Varun Footring (Deputy Head Pastoral and Attendance Officer)
- Mr Alastair Thomas (Head)
- Mrs Nicole Burroughs (Director of Admissions, Communications and Marketing)
- Mrs Sarah Horrox (School Secretary)
- Mr Tom James (School Governor with responsibility for attendance)

### **4. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE**

Every half-day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. In the case of medical/dental appointments, The Manor may require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' (permission) has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) being engaged and they may impose sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Examples of unauthorised absences include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to be marked in the register
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been authorised by the Head
- Excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, parents must never cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives children the impression that attendance does not matter and often perpetuates the behaviour.

Parents can support their child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bedtimes
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Maintaining open and honest communication with The Manor
- Being positive about school, even if your own experience was less than positive
- Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

## **5. SEVERE ABSENTEEISM (SA)**

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' when they miss 50% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is causing significant damage to any child's academic and social progress and can have lifelong consequences. All SA pupils at The Manor will have an Individual Attendance Plan, which will incorporate multi-agency input. You will be expected to engage with all partners to improve your child's attendance to 95+%.

## **6. PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The Manor monitors all absence thoroughly. Any child that is seen to have reached the PA threshold, or is at risk of moving towards that threshold, is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we may discuss academic support for your child where absence affects their attainment.

PA pupils and their parents may be subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include allocation of additional support through a Mentor or a Learning Support Assistant, use of circle times, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also made known to the County Attendance team. If your child becomes a PA pupil, we may seek your consent to complete a Strengths and Needs (Early Help) Assessment with you and consider convening a Team Around the Family in consultation with the Local Authority.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, we will intensify support through statutory children's social care and work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.

## **7. SUPPORT FOR PUPILS WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS OR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) WITH POOR ATTENDANCE**

The Manor maintains the same ambition for attendance for all pupils.

Where pupils have medical conditions or SEND, we will ensure a joint approach with pupils and parents to support them pastorally and, where required, will put in place additional support and adjustments. This may include individual healthcare plans and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.

The Manor will also consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.

Data for pupils in such groups will be regularly monitored, including at Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Governing Board meetings, as well as with local authorities where applicable.

## **8. SUPPORT FOR PUPILS WITH A SOCIAL WORKER**

Where applicable, The Manor will inform a child's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.

## **9. ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

If your child is absent, you must contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence via the school office (01235 858458 or [schoolsecretary@manorprep.org](mailto:schoolsecretary@manorprep.org)).

The Manor will:

- Telephone, email or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- If we are unable to make contact with you by phone, email or text, staff from The Manor may consider and conduct a visit to your home and we may seek advice from the County Attendance Team.
- We may follow this by inviting you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer (Mr Varun Footring - Deputy Head Pastoral) and/or the Head or other members of the SLT as appropriate if absences persist
- Refer the matter to the County Attendance Team if unauthorised attendance moves below 90%.

## **10. CONTACT DETAILS**

There are times when we need to contact parents about school-related matters, including absence, so we need to have your current contact numbers and email addresses at all times. Please ensure that The Manor always has an up to date number and email address for both parents and preferably a third emergency contact person's contact details.

## **11. THE COUNTY ATTENDANCE TEAM**

Parents are expected to contact The Manor at an early stage and work with our staff in resolving attendance issues together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, The Manor may refer the child to the County Attendance Team at Oxfordshire County Council. At the school's request, they may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, per child (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days, a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice for prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. This can result in a criminal record and a fine of up to £2,500, a Community Order, Parenting Order or ultimately a custodial sentence). The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1a).

The County Attendance Team, with The Manor, will encourage you to engage with an Early Help Assessment. Education Supervision Orders may be discussed with you to support rapidly improved attendance.

Parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, in the event of further unauthorised absences, may receive Court summons.

Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of The Manor and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323513 and their email address is [attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

## **12. LATENESS**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and time with their class teacher getting information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

## **13. HOW WE MANAGE TIME KEEPING**

The school day starts at 8:45am, with classrooms open from 8:30am, and we expect your child to be in class at that time (please note that children can arrive earlier than 8:30am and full details of drop off times and Breakfast Club can be found in our Supervision Policy).

Registers are marked by 8:45am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by 8:50am. At 9:15am, the registers will be closed. In accordance with Government Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Whilst there is no mandatory time for afternoon registration, The Manor will take the register directly following the lunchtime period at 1:35pm for EYFS, Year 1 and 2, and at 2:05pm in Years 3-6 in order to support safeguarding and early identification of pupils who are late to return or whom do not return.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer (Mr Varun Footring - Deputy Head Pastoral) and/or the Head to resolve the problem, but you can contact us at any time for support if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

## **14. EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away during this time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in term time to go on holiday.

1. It is widely known that the link between a pupil's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
2. Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school, further education and employment.
3. Graduates earn, on average, double that of young people that leave school with no qualifications.
4. All schools in Oxfordshire are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave.
5. The Head will liaise personally with every family applying for Exceptional Leave to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance and attainment.
6. Exceptional leave is most unlikely to be authorised when a pupil's attendance is less than 95%.
7. Exceptional leave will always be refused when The Manor is aware of any truancy.
8. Exceptional leave will always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or where patterns become identifiable.
9. Reasons for Exceptional Leave will be logged on the pupil's record may be shared as part of the transfer/transition process to future schools.

The County Attendance Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised 'Exceptional Leave'. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned. Please note that it will be per parent per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days, you will each receive a summons to Oxford Magistrates Court. If unauthorised leave is repeated, the County Attendance Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.

## **15. THE MANOR'S MONITORING OF ATTENDANCE**

The Manor will continually work to improve attendance. Throughout the school year, we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. We analyse all absences carefully and where helpful, draw trends based on pupil's characteristics, vulnerabilities, days of the week, subjects missed and repeat illnesses.

The Manor will also use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.

The Manor will work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.

## **16. SAFEGUARDING CONTEXT: CHILDREN WHO ARE ABSENT FROM OR MISSING EDUCATION**

Children being 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. Keeping Children Safe in Education notes that it is important the school or college's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education

in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

Please see The Manor's Safeguarding Policy for our policy on Children Absent From/Missing Education.

## **17. SUMMARY**

The Manor has a legal duty to report and publish our attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance, liaising with Oxfordshire County Council, the Multi-Academy Trust and the Department of Education as appropriate. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly and on time.

We have a lead Governor who scrutinises our attendance arrangements on behalf of all our pupils, in liaison with the Attendance Officer (Deputy Head Pastoral).

All staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance support optimising your child's attainment, mental health and social wellbeing.