# Student Attendance and Punctuality Policy

# Vision

# Our vision is to create a world class education within our academies to enable every pupil and student to realise their full potential and, in particular, their full academic potential.

# Rationale

Cedar Mount Academy believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

1. Introduction & Aims

1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

1.2 Cedar Mount values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

1.3 Cedar Mount recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

# 2. Legal Framework

2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

2.2 A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 17 2013/14, and 18 2014/15.

2.3 Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

2.4 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

2.5 The register must record whether the pupil was:

* present;
* absent;
* present at approved educational activity; or
* unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

**3. Categorising absence**

3.1 Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

3.2 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil’s absence has been received.

3.3 Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

3.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:

3.5 IllnessIn most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

3.6 Medical/Dental Appointments Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

# 3.7 Other Authorised Circumstances this relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

3.8 Excluded (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child’s class teacher/form tutor/Head of Year will make arrangements for work to be sent home and collected by the Student Support Officer (SSO) for the Year group.

3.9 Family Holidays and Extended Leave - Parents will not be granted permission to take their children on holiday during term time following current legislative guidelines. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday, and this absence will be coded as unauthorised. Parents should be made aware that if their child is absent for **any** of their education during that academic year, due to an unauthorised absence, they will be issued with a penalty notice.

3.10 If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school’s roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

3.11 Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time 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. This should be no more than ten days.

# 3.12 Religious Observance. Cedar Mount acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

3.13 It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent’s religious body.

3.14 Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent. However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

# 3.15 Study Leave Study leave may be granted for Year 11 pupils approaching GCSE examinations. School will offer in school study programmes/interventions during this period to reduce absence levels.

# 3.16 Traveller Absence The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

3.17 To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

3.18 It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

3.19 When in or around Manchester, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

3.20 Cedar Mount will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the pupil’s school place at Cedar Mount will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

3.21 Cedar Mount can only effectively operate as the child’s base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

* Advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
* Inform the school regarding proposed return dates

3.22 Cedar Mount will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

3.23 Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

* The child is on roll and attending another visited school.
* Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority’s Traveller Education Service.
* The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced.

3.24 Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

# 3.25 Late Arrival Registration begins at 8.55am, pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late in form registration. The register will close at 9.45am; pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as ‘U’ unauthorised late, this will not be authorised and will countas an absence for that school session. On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the Community Entrance to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school and sign in at the ‘late desk’.

3.26 The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

3.27 The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

# 3.28 Unauthorised absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school. Parents will be advised to send their child into school if they do not have supporting medical appointment cards or evidence to support illness.

3.29 Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

* A pupil’s/family member’s birthday.
* Shopping for uniforms.
* Having their hair cut.
* Closure of a sibling’s school for INSET (or other) purposes.
* “Couldn’t get up”.
* Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school.
* Holidays taken during school term time.
* Persistent illness without medical evidence.

**4. Deletions from the Register**

4.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

* The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order.
* The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority.
* The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age.
* Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed.
* Death of a pupil.
* Transfer between schools.
* Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system.
* Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.
* A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age.
* In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team).
* 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil.
* Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.

4.2 Cedar Mount will follow Manchester City Council’s Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil’s whereabouts is unknown.

**5. Roles and Responsibilities**

5.1 We believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community. As such, the Governing Body will:

* Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents.
* Annually review the school’s Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
* Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters.
* Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
* Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of all staff within the school.
* Monitor the school’s attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings.
* Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or DfE required and on time.
* The Assistant Vice Principal with the responsibility for Attendance will lead on all attendance issues.
* Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site *(including home school provisions e.g. NISAI)*.
* Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
* Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
* Ensure that attendance data is collected & analysed to demonstrate correlations between attendance & attainment.

# 5.2 The Leadership Team will:

* Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
* Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
* Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
* Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually including a parental consultation forum.
* Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
* Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
* Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
* Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required and on time.
* Report the school’s attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance.
* Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
* Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
* Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
* Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
* Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

5.3 Department Heads/Pastoral Staff/Class Teachers/Form Tutors will:

* Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
* Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
* Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation.
* Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
* Issue and raise a ‘Missing Child Procedure Form’ (See Behaviour Policy) if a pupil fails to attend a lesson within their faculty, this will only be applicable where a child has been marked present the period before or in form registration. The form will enable the child to be located if they are on the school site complying with the school safeguarding policy.
* Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence.
* Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
* Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
* Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

5.4 We request that Parents will:

* Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
* Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
* Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours.
* Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
* Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child’s attendance.
* Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child’s education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
* Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
* Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
* Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time, where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Head Teacher in advance of booking the holiday.

**6. Using Attendance Data**

6.1 Pupil’s attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil’s attendance is a cause for concern.

6.2 Each week the Head of Year will provide all Form Tutors with attendance data for the previous week for each pupil within their form group. Heads of Year will provide Form Tutors with updated attendance matrix indicating relevant levels of intervention needed.

6.3 This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action.

6.4 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

6.5 Cedar Mount will share attendance data with the DfE as required.

6.6 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

**7. Support Systems**

7.1 They Academy recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child’s life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child’s attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

7.2 The Academy also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

7.3 The Academy will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

* Discussion with parents and pupils
* Attendance panels
* Parenting contracts
* Attendance report cards
* Referrals to support agencies
* Learning mentors
* Pupil Voice Activities
* Buddy systems
* PSHE
* Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials
* Family learning
* Reward systems
* Time limited part time time-tables
* Additional learning support
* Behaviour support
* Inclusion units
* Reintegration support packages

7.4 Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

7.5 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the attendance team will consider the use of legal sanctions. This may include a ‘fast track to prosecution’.

**8. Legal Sanctions**

# 8.1 Prosecution. Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates’ Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

8.2 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

8.3 A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

8.4 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

8.5Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

8.6 The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed half termly by the attendance lead.

8.7 The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

8.8 Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council’s Parenting Contract Protocol.

8.9Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

* A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
* A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

8.10 A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.

8.11 Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

8.12 Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Manchester City Council’s Penalty Notice Protocol.

**9. Punctuality Protocols**

9.1 Head of Year responsibilities. Each week the Heads of Year are given the ‘weekly lates data’ from the Attendance Team, they will then be responsible for:

* Informing pupils of the detention. Working with Form Tutors to ensure that pupils attend C3/C4 detentions.
* Monitoring all lateness for their year group and liaising closely with the Assistant Head of Year and Attendance Officer on this issue.
* Developing strategies with the Form Tutors, Assistant Head of Year and Academic Mentor on punctuality.
* Using rewards and sanctions to positively promote good punctuality.
* Liaising with parents / carers, and arranging meetings to discuss punctuality.
* Monitoring detention data and arranging follow up detentions if required.

9.2Teachers and Form Tutors responsibilities

* To be fully aware of and follow the late and post registration truancy procedures contained within this document.
* Responsible for promoting good punctuality and attendance within their group.
* Providing a positive role model by being on time for registration and lessons.
* Making registration a positive experience for pupils by engaging with them and following the guidelines for form period.
* Ensuring that all pupils in their form are aware of the procedures for lateness.

9.3 Heads of Subject responsibilities

* Develop strategies with their department to promote punctuality to lessons, using rewards and sanctions to achieve this.
* Monitor pupils arriving late to lessons.
* Send letters home to parents where a problem has been identified.
* Where appropriate, liaise with Heads of Year, Assistant Heads of Year & Attendance Officer.

9.4 All Staff responsibilities

* To be fully aware of and follow the late and post registration truancy procedures contained within this document.
* Act as good, positive role models by being on time to registrations and to lessons, and by reinforcing the need for good attendance and punctuality.
* Follow the late procedure with pupils.
* Ensure that pupils follow the late procedure.
* Challenge pupils who fail to follow procedure and if necessary seek support on this.

9.5 Attendance Officer responsibilities

* Record the times of pupils who arrive late in the late book.
* Challenge pupils as to the reason for lateness and remind them of their responsibilities.
* Inform the Heads of Year & the SLT of the pupils with late marks through a daily meeting.
* Review registers period 1 through to period 6 for absences & lates.

9.6 Procedure at Registration (am)

* Registration takes place at 8.55 a.m. each morning in Form Tutor time. Form Tutor enters the attendance data through Lesson Monitor on SIMS. If a pupil is present a / is entered. If a pupil is absent an N is entered. If a pupil arrives late to group L is entered.
* A HEAD COUNT MUST THEN BE MADE TO CHECK ACCURACY before the register is submitted. It is vital that the head count matches the number of presents recorded on the computer. If it does not, the register MUST NOT be submitted before an appropriate amendment is made.
* If a pupil arrives after 8.55am, pupils should register at the late desk (operational from 8.55am – 9.45am).
* If, during registration there is an experience of computer failure, a paper register must be taken and sent immediately after registration to the Attendance team. If for some reason a pupil attends registration that is not on the computer listing, a note must be sent immediately to Attendance Officer advising the staff of the pupil's presence.

9.7 Post Registration Procedure

* If a pupil is in school, but not present in a lesson the class teacher must send an email/Child Missing Form to the Attendance Officer who will contact the AHOY for the allocated Year group. The AHOY will aim to locate the child within the period reported and all comments recorded on SIMS. This is part of staff responsibility in terms of "Safeguarding Children and keeping children safe (Every Child Matters), and for Health and Safety reasons.
* If a pupil is seen absconding from the premises, the Attendance Officer and AHOY must be informed as soon as possible. Where possible staff will go to look for the pupil within the Academy site. If pupil cannot be located, parents will be informed and advised to contact the police.

9.8 Monitoring and Sanctions Process for Lates

* If a pupil is late 2 or more times in a week, a warning letter will be sent home outlining school sanctions, expectations and procedures linked to the punctuality policy by Assistant Head of Year/Attendance Officer.
* 1 late will equal a C3 30 minute after school detention.
* 2 lates per week will equal a C4 1 hour after school detention.
* Failure to attend a C4 detention will equal a day in the IEU and a parental meeting will be arranged by Assistant Head of Year.
* 10+ absent (after registration) lates – Fixed penalty warning letter sent to parents by school Attendance Officers.
* Late lists will be examined each week by the Heads of Year, Assistant Head of Year and Attendance Officer.
* Persistent re-offenders will be invited in for a Punctuality Panel interview with their parents/carers.
* If parents fail to turn up to discuss the issue a home visit will be made by the school attendance officer and the interview will either be re-arranged or conducted in the home.

9.9 Late Arrival to Lessons

* Late arrival at lessons will be monitored through the electronic registration system.
* Subject teachers and leaders are responsible for organising sanctions relating to students that are late to lessons.

9.10 Rewards

* The reward group are responsible for developing strategies to promote good punctuality. They will support each year team to try to improve punctuality.
* Included in this will be the positive promotion of good punctuality through rewards e.g. certificates, cash rewards, assemblies, letters of commendation for good punctuality and for improvement.

9.11 Monitoring

* Punctuality to lessons will be monitored on a daily basis.
* Overall punctuality will be monitored on a half termly basis and statistics produced. These will be shared with all staff at relevant meetings.
* Year punctuality will be monitored by Heads of House and shared at student welfare team meetings.