



MARICOURT  
CATHOLIC  
HIGH SCHOOL  
& SIXTH FORM CENTRE

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

## Mission Statement

“Our Maricourt family, with Christ at the centre, is a community of welcome, compassion and respect in which we are encouraged to discover our true purpose and empowered to achieve the extraordinary so as to be the change we want to see in our world.”

**INSPIRE**  
WITH  
MARICOURT

POLICY REVIEWED: Feb 2023  
SCHEDULED REVIEW: Sep 2025

## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

**ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY**  
**APPROVED BY GOVERNORS: Feb 2023**  
**POLICY TO BE REVIEWED: Sept 2025**

<b>HEAD TEACHER</b>	<b>Mrs T Hatton</b>
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<b>CHAIR OF GOVERNORS</b>	<b>Mr C Manning</b>

### **KEY ATTENDANCE STAFF IN SCHOOLS:**

Attendance officer	Mrs M Hunter
Attendance officer	Mrs M Ariss

**This Attendance & Punctuality Policy is part of a broader suite of Safeguarding Policies, including the School's Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy.**

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## Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Maricourt Catholic High School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore, having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our Policy applies to all children registered at this school and this Policy is made available on our school website to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school.

The DfE has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities: **Working together to improve school attendance**. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head teacher and Governors at our school are committed to:

- Building strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them
- Working closely with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

**\*Definition of parent: Section 576 of the Education Act 1996** - A parent in relation to any child or young person, includes any person: -

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for a child; or
- who has care of a child i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

This also includes all parents who are absent. Parental partners can be included whether they are married or the natural parent of the child as they have 'care' of the child. If a pupil lives with a grandparent or older sibling as their main carer, they can also be included as they are the main care provider. It is also important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the pupil, that parent is still responsible for ensuring their child attends school every day.

## **At Maricourt we understand the law requires:**

- Our school to have an admission register and an attendance register.
- Our governors to have regard to the statutory guidance '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)'.
- Our School to put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from school.
- Our school to notify the Local Authority (LA) when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.
- Our to inform the LA of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

## **2. Principles of the Maricourt attendance policy**

The Governing Body of Maricourt places a high priority on achieving standards and feel that excellent pupil attendance and punctuality are essential. They undertake this role by

- Nominating a named Governor for Attendance.
- Monitoring what strategies, the school has put into place to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence and take appropriate action should attendance levels impact significantly on attainment.
- Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.
- (Please add in here what you report to governors regarding absence for example stats, patterns of attendance, pupil premium, SEND support
- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.

In order for children to achieve their potential, pupils must be highly motivated to learn and keen and eager to attend school. Regular, punctual attendance will establish good habits that will support them throughout their lives. To achieve this, the Governors and staff are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure that the school achieves a MINIMUM of 97% attendance throughout the school.

The Government expects us to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (less than 90%).
- Ensure every pupil has access to a suitable education, to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

**This table illustrates the impact of attendance that is 95% or below**

<b>Attendance during one school year</b>	<b>Equals this number of days absent</b>	<b>Which is approximately this many weeks absent</b>	<b>Which means this number of lessons missed</b>
<b>95%</b>	<b>9.5 days</b>	<b>2 weeks</b>	<b>50 lessons</b>
<b>90%</b>	<b>19 days</b>	<b>4 weeks</b>	<b>100 lessons</b>
<b>85%</b>	<b>29 days</b>	<b>6 weeks</b>	<b>150 lessons</b>
<b>80%</b>	<b>38days</b>	<b>8 weeks</b>	<b>200 lessons</b>

### **3. National context**

The 1996 Education Act, (section 444) states that parents (including non-related adult carers in the child’s household) have a **legal responsibility** to ensure that those of compulsory school age are educated, either by ‘**regular**’ attendance at school or ‘otherwise’. The 2008 Education and Skills Act, (section 155) specifies the same requirement regarding regular attendance at alternative provision.

**The duty on parents is to ensure that their children are educated, either at school or ‘otherwise’. Education is therefore compulsory. In terms of ‘otherwise’, children may be educated by their parents at home, by a private tutor or in establishments other than schools, ie – FE colleges from the age of 14, special units, hospitals or in alternative educational programmes or work experience. The law allows parents to choose the alternative options, provided they can demonstrate to the Local Authority that the education is full-time and ‘suitable’ to the child’s education needs, up until the relevant leaving-date for all young people.**

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

For most pupils, the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year. Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

### **4. Daily procedures**

Under the 2006 Education Regulations, the school is **legally** required to register students twice daily. Registers are marked in the morning between 8:50 and 9:05 and in the afternoon between 13:25 and 13:30. It is essential that all students are registered on both occasions.

School starts at 08:50 when all pupils/students should be in their form/classroom, in preparation for the register being taken at 08:55. **It is a legal requirement that a register is taken at the start of the day.** Not only does the process allow us to monitor attendance but also to act as a student checklist in respect of health and safety issues – e.g. Fire Drill. Each year a school calendar is sent out and is also on the website which clearly indicates the days when your child is expected to be in school.

## 5. **Absence from school**

Absence from school should be avoided, however, **if your child cannot come to school because of illness, you should advise the school on the first day of absence by telephone.** If no message is received, we will assume that your child is absent without your permission. We will then make every effort to contact you. The school requires two emergency contact numbers. It is essential that the school is kept informed of changes of contact details such as phone numbers and addresses. At Maricourt, we would encourage students with minor ailments to attend school. Only when students are unable to attend due to the severity of symptoms, or attendance would exacerbate an illness, should absence be considered.

**Once contact (verbal and/or written) has been made with the parent the school will determine if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.**

The school will only **authorise** a medical absence if the circumstances are unavoidable. The school has the right to request medical evidence if a parent rings the school to confirm the student is unwell. This may include: a medical appointment card with one appointment entered, slip with date, pupils name and surgery stamp, signed by GP Receptionist, letter from a professional, doctor's note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence. The Head Teacher may not authorise medical absence without this evidence.

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, parents should inform the school in advance so a decision can be made whether to authorise the absence or not.

The school **may** authorise absence under certain specific circumstances. However, the parent must contact the Headteacher in advance to secure authorisation. This **may** include work related interviews and meetings with external agencies. The Headteacher **may** also authorise events where students are involved in any supervised sporting events or trials, theatre performances and participation in acts of religious worship.

## 6. **Children with a social worker first day response**

If children who have a social worker are absent from school, we will contact the Local Authority. We may request a home visit as part of the first day response. We will also contact the child's social worker and the Virtual School where appropriate.

## 7. **Persistent absence**

Maricourt has a responsibility to reduce the number of students whose attendance is

below 90% over the school year. **Students with attendance below 90% fall into the 'Persistent Absentee' category.**

- When a student's attendance falls below 95% or punctuality is a concern (at any stage of the year) we will:
- Invite you into school to discuss the situation with our (title of staff e.g. support worker) Headteacher if absences persist
- Create a personalised /support /action plan to address any barriers to attendance
- Set a target with timescales to secure improvement in attendance
- Offer support by sign posting to other agencies or services if appropriate. This may involve undertaking an early help assessment.
- Consider any interventions that have worked previously to bring about improvements in attendance.
- Consider any school age siblings in our school or other schools and work in partnership to deliver a joint approach
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions
- Consult with our Local Authority point of contact from the School Support Services.

**If parents in our school fail to comply with the support plan and there is no improvement in their child's attendance a referral may be made to the Local Authority requesting legal intervention through the issuing of a penalty notice or the School Attendance Panel.**

## **8. Reluctance to go to school**

Sometimes students seem anxious about leaving home to go to school. They may tell you that they feel unwell or give another reason to not attend. You may notice that they are worried from things that they say e.g. that they do not want to do any particular subjects, feel that they have no friends or are being bullied. If this is the case, please contact the school as soon as possible to speak to your child's Progress Leader. At Maricourt, we pride ourselves on the support we offer our students. Our pastoral team use a range of support including:

- Learning mentors
- Chaplain
- External agencies
- Resilience and mental health workshops
- Well-being ambassadors
- Reset hub

In order for us to best support your child, it is important that they attend school.

## **9. Leave of absence in school time**

The Headteacher may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances. They will also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. **From this perspective, leave of absence in term time is no longer a parental right and will only be authorised at the Headteacher's discretion.** Under DFE guidelines the school will



notify the Local Authority if a parent/s takes leave of absence **without** the Headteacher's permission. In these cases, the **G code** will be used on the register to show this absence is **unauthorised**.

Under these circumstances, the school will apply to the **Local Authority** for a **Penalty Charge Notice Fine (£60-£120)** to be issued by the Local Authority. The £60 Penalty Charge Notice will need to be paid in full separately by both parents within 21 days and will rise to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the Penalty Charge Notice is not paid within 28 days, parents can be prosecuted under section 444, the Education Act 1996.

Children attending Sefton schools, including (name of school), are not allowed absence for holidays. Any absence, other than for illness or emergency medical attention, will be coded as Unauthorised, (G) – Family holiday not agreed or (O) Unauthorised absence.

Parents may choose to complete an 'Exceptional Circumstances Form' stating why they are removing their child during term time. This is given to the Head teacher. Only exceptional circumstances will be authorised.

If an 'exceptional circumstance form' is rejected, then the absence; should the parent still proceed with the removal of their child during term time; is dealt with under the Sefton **Council Code of Conduct for issuing a Penalty Charge Notice**.

**It is important for parents / carers to note that the school will not authorise ANY leave of absence unless the school feels the circumstances are unavoidable.**

The school reserves the right to either contact the parents/carers directly or make an immediate referral to social care or the police if the school feels a student is potentially at-risk while being taken out of school during term time.

The school will seek advice from the Local Authority if a student fails to return from an extended family holiday during term time and the school have made reasonable enquiries but cannot locate the student or their family. **This applies to leave of absence that are both authorised and unauthorised by the school.** As a result, school will invoke CME procedures. The school may remove the student from roll under such circumstances, in consultation with the Local Authority.

## **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Such circumstances may include:

- A pupil not attending school to go shopping.
- A pupil not attending school as it is their birthday or the birthday of a family member.
- A pupil not attending school as the family have gone to the airport to meet a visiting relative.

- A pupil not attending school due to attending a hospital appointment for another family member.
- A pupil not attending school due to the fact the family returned late in the previous evening from a family holiday.
- A pupil not attending school as they are looking for after younger siblings.
- A pupil attends a medical appointment in the morning but then fails to return to school for afternoon lessons.

Our school will always try to bring about an improvement in attendance through a support plan, however, we may request penalty charge notices to address unauthorised absence. A minimum evidential requirement of ten (10) school sessions lost to unauthorised absence by any pupil in the current term **and/or** eighteen (18) sessions lost to unauthorised absence over two consecutive terms will be required to trigger the process.

The Local Authority will:

- Issue a formal written warning to the parent/carer of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued.
- In the same letter, set a period of 15 school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence.
- Issue a penalty charge notice through the post at the end of the 15-day period if the
- required level of improvement has not been achieved.

#### **10. Local authority school attendance panel 15% unauthorised absence**

Our school may refer pupils who have 15% unauthorised absence to the School Attendance Panel when there has been no improvement in attendance through interventions, we have put into place including an attendance support/action plan/early help plan.

#### **What is the purpose of the School Attendance Panel Meeting?**

The purpose of the School Attendance Panel meeting is for you and your child to meet with representatives from the Local Authority to identify the reasons for absence and to work together to improve attendance.

#### **What will happen at the School Attendance Panel Meeting?**

The reasons for absence will be identified and different strategies to improve attendance will be considered:

- A parenting contract will be agreed.
- An attendance target date for improvement will be set.
- The student's attendance will then be closely monitored for a period of 8 school weeks.

If the parent fails to attend without reasonable justification this could result in a Penalty Charge Notice being issued to parents/carers or court proceedings under the 'Single Justice' process. Under section 444, a Penalty Charge Notice will be issued

for £60 to parents. This will be issued to both parents even if one of the parents does not live with the student. Each parent will have 21 days to make payment. This will rise to £120 if the initial fine is paid between 22 and 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority. There is no right of appeal by parents against the penalty charge notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Charge Notice Fine will result in further legal action being taken by the courts, with the maximum fine currently £2,500 or three months in prison.

### **What happens next?**

Whilst the intention of the School Attendance Panel meeting is that the attendance will improve, if the attendance deteriorates by the target review date the Local Authority may recommend legal action is taken. This could include a fixed penalty notice being issued, prosecution in the Magistrates' Court, Education Supervision Orders or Parenting Orders.

**Issuing Penalty Charge Notices:** Each parent receives a penalty charge notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480. Failure to pay the penalty charge notices in Sefton may result in prosecution.

**Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

**Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Under the 1989 Children Act the Local Authority has the power to issue an **Education Supervision Order** (ESO) and place a child under their supervision on the grounds that the child is not being 'properly educated' and is in danger of 'significant harm'. The Local Authority can issue an order if the child is persistently absent from school. The Local Authority appointed 'Supervisor' can give 'directions' to the parents on how the child should be educated and work with the parent to ensure the child attends school regularly.

Under the 2003 Anti-Social Behaviour Act, if a student continues to have attendance issues after a parent has been convicted, the courts can also issue a **Parenting Order**. This legally requires the parents to participate in a programme of parenting support and counselling. If the unauthorised absence continues, a new case will be brought against the parent/s but previous parental failure to engage with the school and Local Authority can be cited.

## **11. Punctuality**

As you may be aware, the law treats some persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents may be prosecuted by the Local Authority if late arrival is not resolved.

### Poor punctuality can lead to your child:

- Feeling embarrassed in front of their friends.
- Missing the beginning of vital lessons.
- Missing important instructions for the rest of the school day.
- Learning bad habits which could affect their employability in the future.

Minutes late per day during the school year	Equal days' worth of teaching lost in a year
5 minutes	3.4 days
10 minutes	6.9 days
15 minutes	10.3 days
20 minutes	13.8 days
30 minutes	20.7 days

### Late Procedures

Children who arrive late must attend student services to sign in. A reason for the lateness is also requested. The admin staff will:

- Update the register system with their mark.
- Children who frequently arrive late will be monitored with further intervention put in place by Progress Leaders
- The Education Welfare Officer/other member of staff is to carry out unannounced 'Late Gate' sessions to challenge parents over reasons for poor punctuality.
- Children who arrive late after the registers have closed due to a medical appointment will be marked M
- Students without a valid reason for late marks will be issued with a lunch time detention.

**Any child arriving after 9:15am (or whatever time) for any reason other than medical will be marked U (late after registers closed).**

Children who must leave for any reason throughout the day should be signed out at the main office by their parent/carer or appropriate adult. This is strongly discouraged. Parents are requested to make dental or medical appointments outside of school hours.

## 12. Roles and responsibilities

### IMPROVING ATTENDANCE – WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:

- Provide two emergency contact numbers to the school.
- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child must be unexpectedly absent (e.g., sickness).

- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible. Obviously, this is not always possible but, in such cases, try to minimise the disruption to the day by getting an early morning appointment so that your child can attend afterwards OR a late afternoon appointment so that he/she can complete most of their timetable before leaving.
- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barrier to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.
- Encourage your child to take responsibility for being on time for school, ensuring they have a realistic bedtime and will not be too tired to get up in the morning for school. Equipment should be prepared the night before. Regularly checking your child's planner can help you to do this.
- Discourage your child from staying overnight with friends during the week. This sometimes leads to them both being late (or not attending at all) the next day.
- Leave of absence during term time is not a parental right. If there are special or exceptional circumstances, please contact the Head teacher and a decision will be made if the absence can be authorised or not.
- Talk positively about going to school.
- Monitor your child's internet and social media use to ensure they are not experiencing any difficulties that may prevent them from wanting to attend school.
- Take any worries seriously but do not show that you are unduly concerned. Believe that they will be sorted out.
- Contact school before the concerns escalate.

### **Improving attendance – What school does:**

- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.
- Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.
- Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.
- Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance
- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.
- Have a clear, graduated approach to monitoring and improving sub-optimal attendance

- Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.
- Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.
- Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.
- Marks the registers in accordance with the law twice a day.
- Informs any parents/carers who have not contacted the school, of the absence of their child on a particular day.
- Maintains records and monitors attendance of students on a regular basis.
- Authorises absences in accordance with the government guidelines. Please note that only the school can authorise absence.
- Contacts parents / carers when the attendance falls below acceptable levels and/or when patterns of absence are causing concerns.
- Undertake Early Help Assessment where it is deemed appropriate.
- Monitor pupils who are supported by the In Year Fair Access Panel and those who attend alternative provision including Complimentary Education (please add your attendance arrangements for this).
- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.
- If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.
- Works with external agencies to maintain good attendance and to support the student/family with any issues that may affect attendance and punctuality to school.
- Provides re – integration support for students returning from absence.
- Maintains a range of strategies to encourage good attendance by means of rewards.
- Inform parents of individual pupil's attendance record each term at Parents' Evening.
- Works with relevant external agencies if a students' attendance becomes a concern, ie – Social Care, Early Help Services, Police, YOT, SEND.
- Make referrals to the Local Authority School Attendance Panel where pupils' attendance levels are becoming a cause for concern.
- Make referrals to the School Nurse team where appropriate to seek advice to support the pupil.
- Works in partnership with the Local Authority to improve school attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism sometimes utilising legal interventions.
- Campaign as a means of working with parents to resolve issues affecting levels of attendance
- Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:

- Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.
- Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.

### **Improving attendance – The role of the Local Authority**

- Hold a termly conversation with our school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.
- Identified point of contact for our school who will assist us in signposting families for support including early help where appropriate.
- Provide a school attendance panel meeting for our pupils who have 15% unauthorised absence
- Work jointly with our school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and Education Supervision Orders.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.
- Ensure improving school attendance and reducing persistent absence is a priority in all multi agency plans including child protection, child in need, cared for children (LAC) and Early Help.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).
- Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.
- Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.
- Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.
- Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker by providing a first day response system.
- Attendance to be a priority in personal education plans for looked-after children.
- Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.

### **13. Communication with parents**

At Maricourt, we recognise the value of good communication in ensuring improved attendance. As part of our attendance and punctuality processes, this

communication includes:

- Reporting to parents at least three times a year in reports on their child's attendance.
- Highlighting the importance of attendance through our social media channels
- Letters informing of reduced or sub-optimal attendance as part of our "A-Star attendance" graduated approach
- Progress Leader/parental meetings to discuss action plans
- SLT Attendance panels

#### **14. Rewards and incentive**

Rewards and recognition play an important role in long term, sustained improvement. At Maricourt, we strive to be positive in our interventions. For attendance, this includes:

- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements
- Communication attendance weekly, praising those who have demonstrated good or improved attendance
- Rewards individuals through entry in competitions
- Recognises improvement through contact home with parents.

#### **15. School attendance, safeguarding and children missing in education**

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff will follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

##### **Notifying the Local Authority**

Our school notify the Local Authority of any pupil/student who fails to attend school regularly after making reasonable enquiries or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

The school must also notify the Local Authority of any pupil/student who is to be deleted from the admission register.

Our school will demonstrate that we have taken reasonable enquiries to ascertain the whereabouts of children that would be considered 'missing'.

**Where a child leaves our school without a destination or another school is not identified our school follow Sefton Council Children Missing Education Procedures and they can be found at [https://www.sefton.gov.uk/schools-learning/attendance-and-welfare/children-missing-education-\(cme\).aspx](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/schools-learning/attendance-and-welfare/children-missing-education-(cme).aspx). The school will liaise with the Children Missing Education Co-ordinator who can be contacted on 0151 935 3181 or [CME@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:CME@sefton.gov.uk)**

#### **16. ATTENDANCE DATA**



We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking as increased absence affects attainment.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance.

## 17. **Absence codes**

According to the DfE guidance the following codes are used for authorised absence on the register.

<b>Code I: Illness</b> Schools can request medical evidence from parents/carers if they feel the authenticity of an illness is in doubt.
<b>Code M: Medical or dental appointments</b> Parents / Carers are encouraged to arrange appointments out of school hours, but the school will authorise if confirmation of the appointment is provided.
<b>Code C: Other circumstances</b> This code will be used for any authorised non-medical reasons for a child's absence from school, i.e. – family funeral.
<b>Code B: Off-site educational activity</b> This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised, and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing schoolwork. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by/of individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.
<b>Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment.</b> This code will be used if a student is registered at two schools.
<b>Code J: Interview</b> This code will be used when it has been agreed that the student can miss school to attend an interview or entrance exam.
<b>Code P: Approved sporting activity</b> This code will be used in times of approved sporting activities in school times, i.e. – training sessions, trials and sporting events.

**Code R: Religious Observation**

This code is used to cover major religious festivals during term-time. The school will only authorise one day of absence for religious events.

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This code is used to cover major religious festivals during term-time. The school will only authorise one day of absence for religious events.

**Code V: Educational visits and trips****Code W: Work Experience**

According to the DFE guidance the following codes are to be used for unauthorised absences on the register:

**Code G: Family holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of agreed period**

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence and the parents still take the child on holiday, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for the leave of absence in advance the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

**Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided**

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence.

**Code O: Absent from school without authorisation**

If the school is **not satisfied** with the reason given for absence, they should record it as unauthorised.

**Code U: Arrived late to school after 9.15am**

If a student arrives after 9.15am without any written or verbal confirmation from parents/carers to explain their lateness, the school will mark the pupil with the U code. This means that, although the student is in school, she is marked absent for the entire morning. This will be marked as an authorised absence and could result in prosecution for parents/carers if the pupil is persistently late.

According to the DFE guidance 'If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the Local Authority'. In addition, 'Local Authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).



**MARICOURT**  
CATHOLIC  
HIGH SCHOOL  
& SIXTH FORM CENTRE

## Appendix

- Appendix 1 – attendance support plan
- Appendix 2 – attendance panel referral form
- Appendix 3 – Maricourt attendance guide



# Attendance support plan

*10% or more of sessions missed*

<b>Pupil Name:</b>		<b>Date of meeting:</b>
<b>DOB:</b>	<b>School:</b>	<b>Year Group:</b>
<b>Address:</b>		
<b>Overall Attendance %</b>	<b>Authorised Abs%</b>	<b>Unauthorised Abs%</b>
<b>Persistent Absence %</b>		

<b>Details of Parents / Carers (including Absent Parent(s), Private Fostering Arrangement</b> (Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a 'close relative'. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer, for 28 days or more).	
<b>Forename:</b>	<b>Surname:</b>
<b>Relationship to child:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Contact No.:</b>	
<b>Present at meeting:</b>	
<b>Forename:</b>	<b>Surname:</b>
<b>Relationship to child:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Contact No.:</b>	
<b>Present at meeting:</b>	
<b>Discussion: - Reason for absence</b>	

**What is going well?**

<b>Views of Parent/Carer:</b>
<b>Views of the Child:</b>
<b>Views of the School:</b>

**What are we worried about?**

<b>Views of Parent/Carer:</b>
<b>Views of the Child:</b>
<b>Views of the School:</b>

**What needs to happen?**

<b>Action Plan</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Date to be completed</b>

**Date attendance will be reviewed:**

**Appendix 2 - Attendance Panel Referral Form – this form can only be used if the child has over 15% unauthorised absence and who have had an attendance support plan put in place that has not resulted in improved attendance.**

<p>School: Phone No: Name of Pupil: M/F: First Name: Surname: Address: Post Code: Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s): Others with Parental Responsibility:</p> <p>Has the child got more than 15% Unauthorised absence? YES/NO</p> <p>Is the pupil on an EHC Plan? YES/NO</p> <p>Is pupil on SEN Register? YES/NO If yes, enter Code:</p> <p><b><u>IS THIS CHILD SUBJECT TO A PENALTY NOTICE? YES/NO</u></b></p> <p><b><u>IF YES THE CHILD CAN NOT BE REFERRED TO THE ATTENDANCE PANEL</u></b></p>	<p>DOB:</p> <p>Contact Numbers: Home: Work: Mobile:</p> <p>Yr. &amp; Tutor Group:</p> <p>Ethnicity:</p> <p>Parental Language/Literacy Difficulty</p> <p>Is the pupil a Child in Care? (LAC) YES/NO</p> <p>Is the pupil eligible for Pupil Premium? YES/NO</p>
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**Reasons provided for absence (please attach a current attendance print out)**

**Other agencies involved: e.g. Early Help, Children’s Social Care, Police, CAMHS, YOT, School Health - Any other relevant information**

**Reason for referral – Please attach school support and attendance plan any other relevant information**

**SIGNED:**

**DATE:**

**PRINT NAME:**

**STATUS:**

**Date received by School Support Services:**



# Attendance guide

## Mission Statement

“Our Maricourt family, with Christ at the centre, is a community of welcome, compassion and respect in which we are encouraged to discover our true purpose and empowered to achieve the extraordinary so as to be the change we want to see in our world.”

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#### **Graduated approach to attendance – The A-star system**

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#### **The role of Progress Leaders**

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First day response

Unauthorised absence

Parent outreach

Home visits & welfare checks

Welfare concerns

Vulnerable students

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Raising the status of attendance

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Attendance meeting agenda

## Attendance guide

### Introduction

This guide is intended to support staff in their managing of attendance systems and applying the Maricourt Attendance and punctuality policy. It should be used in addition to the policy and Sefton and Government guidelines on attendance processes.

## Part 1 Graduated approach to attendance

At Maricourt we utilise A-star attendance to support our graduated approach to attendance. A-star is managed by the attendance teams and starts the escalation process once a student's attendance drops below the threshold

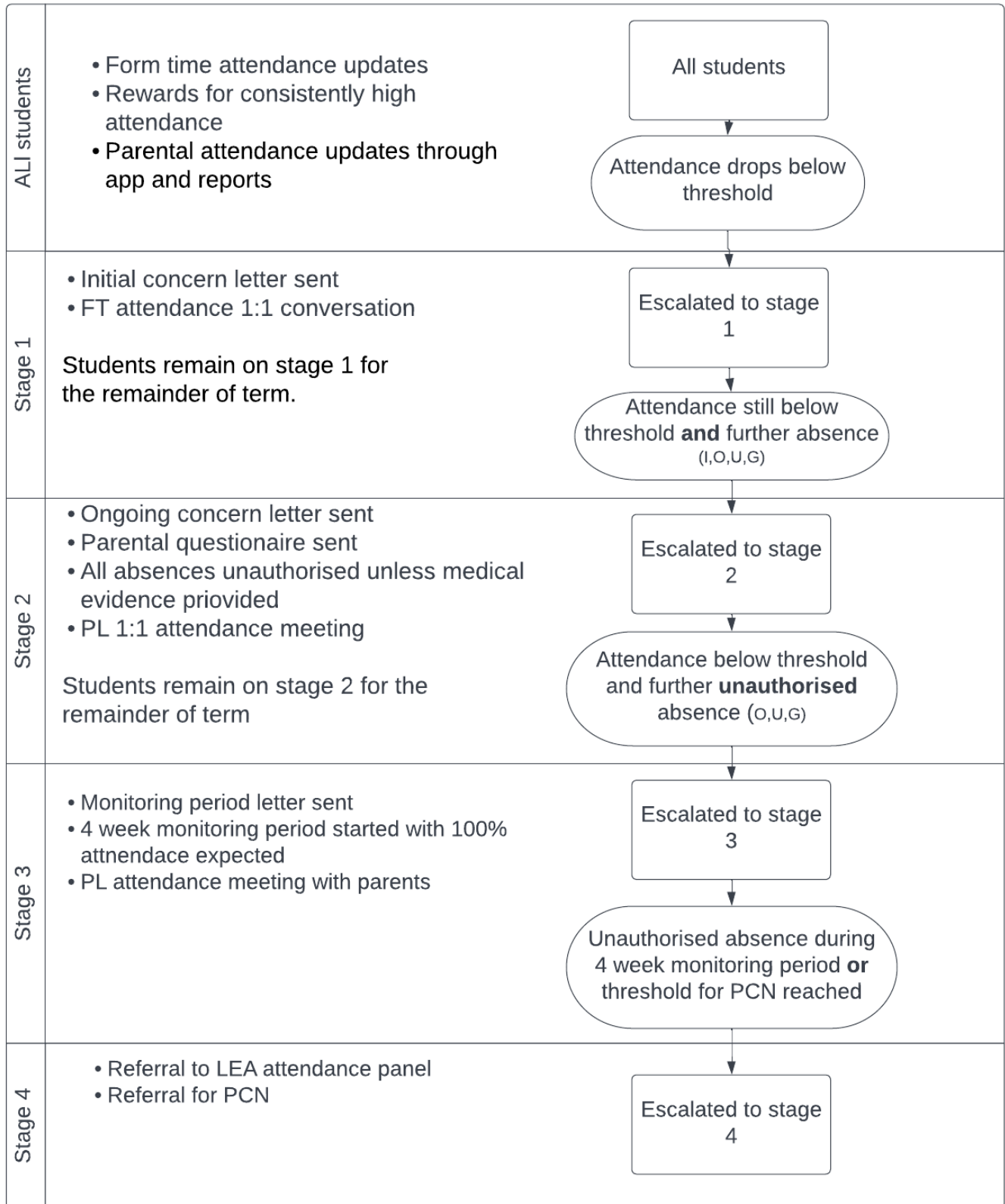
### Targets and 2022/23 threshold

We aim for all students to have an attendance above 97% while recognising that genuine illness can make this unattainable for some students.

Early interventions, including conversations within form time are important to limiting the decline of a student's attendance.

Out threshold for escalation is 93%

<u>Time of year</u>	<u>Expected threshold</u>
Week 1	80%
Week 4	85%
Week 7	93%



## Part 2 The role of The Progress Leader

PLs, along with the attendance officers and Attendance lead, are responsible for leading the improvement of attendance within their year group.

This includes:

1. Communicating the importance of good attendance
2. Meeting fortnightly with the attendance officers
3. 1:1 meetings with students, including focus groups
4. Holding parental meetings for attendance
5. Supporting students with long term absence

### **1. Communicating the importance of good attendance**

- a. **Form time attendance** – ensure that the weekly attendance focus takes place each week. FTs should share attendance data with the form and have individual conversations with students whose attendance has dropped or who have been escalated to stage 1
- b. **Assembly focus** – PLs should highlight the importance of good attendance in assemblies.
- c. **Rewarding good attendance** – termly rewards assemblies should have an attendance focus, recognising good and improved attendance.
- d. **1:1 meetings** with students
- e. **Communication with parents** via phone calls and meetings to highlight the importance of school attendance, discuss barriers to attendance and offer support.

### **2. Fortnightly attendance meetings**

PLs will timetable a meeting fortnightly with the attendance team. This is an opportunity to share information and set the attendance agenda for the coming fortnight. The meeting will focus on:

- Student escalations; who has been escalated through the graduated approach
- List of students for 1:1 meetings
- List of students for parental meetings ahead of stage 3
- Review and update of omitted student list
- Updates on medium/long term absence (School refusers, medical etc)

The attendance lead will join these meetings on a termly basis.

### **3. 1:1 student meetings**

- PLs should meet with students when they have been escalated to stage 2 attendance monitoring and discuss barriers to attendance.

These meetings should offer support and set targets which should be reviewed weekly or fortnightly.

- Focus groups can be a useful tool in targeting support at specific students. PLs should meet at a fixed time with students in the focus group each week for half a term and discuss the previous weeks attendance and how this has affected their overall attendance.

#### **4. Parental meetings**

Parental meetings give opportunity to escalate our concerns of attendance, make adjustments to support improved attendance and set out the impact of poor attendance. While attendance meetings should be called whenever the PL feels there are attendance concerns, they must be held:

- when student is being escalated to stage 3
- every 2 weeks when a student is school refusing, unless a formal safeguarding plan (EH,CIN, CP) has been arranged by the DSL.

It is important that parental meetings and phone calls are logged on SIMS, attendance officers updated and, if there are wellbeing concerns, logged on CPOMS.

#### **Stage 3 meetings**

Parental meetings must be held when a student is escalated up to stage 3 of our graduated response. During this meeting, PLs should outline the 4-week monitoring period as set out in the stage 3 letter and discuss an action plan.

The risk of escalation to LEA referral should be made clear.

Where a parent raises legitimate medical concerns, these should be discussed with the attendance team and, if appropriate, the student omitted from the graduated response while support is put in place. Support that has been put in place should be reviewed and new options explored including, where appropriate, Early Help assessment.

#### **Long term absence meetings**

Where a student is absent long term, regular review meetings should be held.

If a student is not present at these meetings, the attendance team should undertake home visits to check welfare.

Feedback from these meetings, including recommendations to parents, support offered and support in place should be recorded in a student's case study

## **5. Supporting students with long term absence**

Students may be absent from school for a variety of reasons, authorised or unauthorised. Each case should be judged on its merit with the same outcome in mind: to support the students health, well-being and progress. In each case:

- Offer support through our internal and external referrals
- Agree a plan of action with parents (where possible)
- Schedule regular review meetings, updating the attendance team
- Keep case notes of meetings, offers of support, parent/student voice, action plans
- Seek guidance from the attendance lead

Returning from long term absence may require:

- Reduced timetable/phased return
- Well-being support
- Timetable changes
- School transfers
- Referral to LEA
- Medical support through GPs or school nurse
- Internal issues to be resolved.

## **Part 3** **The attendance office**

### **First day response**

The target time for first day response text message is 9:30 each morning.

*Recipients should be checked against long term absence lists prior to the message being sent.*

## **Unauthorised absence**

Students who have received a stage 2 letter will be marked as unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided.

Marks may be inputted as “I” as absence calls are received by staff in the morning.

Absences should be checked against the stage 2 list and, unless medical evidence is received, codes changed to ensure the escalation procedure is followed.

## **Parent outreach**

In addition to communication through first day response and our graduated response, it is important that the attendance team actively contact parents of absent students to encourage a timely return to school.

Attendance officers should ring home for absent students even when reasons have been offered by parents. Students should be called by their 3<sup>rd</sup> day of absence prioritising by:

- SEND
- PP
- Vulnerable students
- Continuous absence

Students who are persistently absent should be called on their 1<sup>st</sup> day of absence

## **Home visits & welfare checks**

It is important that we are in contact with parents/carers on a regular basis, but also that we see students. Students should be scheduled for home visits when:

- There has been no response to First day absence calls for 3 days
- A student has long term absence and does not attend meetings. These students should be seen at least fortnightly. Home visits should be logged on A-Star.
- there are concerns over a student’s welfare

## **Welfare concerns**

Where there are concerns over welfare, attendance officers and PLs should notify



the DSL as a matter of urgency via CPOMS.

## **Vulnerable students**

Attendance of vulnerable students should be checked daily and the DSL notified with a list of absences each morning

Sefton LEA should be notified of any absent Sefton student classified as vulnerable using the pro forma provided by Sefton

## **Reporting on attendance**

Communication within the attendance team is vital if we are to continue our improvement of attendance. The following information should be provided by the attendance office:

### **Progress leaders**

- Student attendance data, separated by form. This should be provided weekly ahead of the form time attendance focus
- Data required for fortnightly attendance meetings, including registration certificates of stage 3 students
- Termly lists of students achieving 100%
- Termly lists of improved attendance

### **Attendance lead (weekly)**

- Attendance summary by group. Year to date and week prior
- List of current continuous absence

### **DSLs (daily)**

- List of absent vulnerable student

### **SENDCo (Weekly)**

- Student attendance figures year to date
- Continuous absence list

## **Raising the status of attendance**

If we are to continue to improve attendance at Maricourt, it is important that we highlight the importance of good attendance to students.

### **Attendance displays and graphics**

Attendance Displays should be reviewed and updated termly. Displays should be prominent up to date

Where possible, digital displays should be updated weekly with graphs of each forms attendance. These should be updated weekly

### **Rewarding attendance**

Communication should be positive and recognise improvements in attendance. The attendance office should send out letters for those students who have seen a substantial improvement in their attendance.

A termly review of students who have improved their attendance should take place, resulting in communication home. Students highlighted as good improvement should be communicated to PLs, along with 100% attendance students to ensure recognition in rewards assemblies.

Attendance competitions and rewards should be held throughout the year to incentivise good attendance. These can take the format of:

- Whole year group prize draws
- Targeted focus group prize draws
- Rewards for students meeting targets

**Part 4**  
**Appendix**



Attendance meeting – Agenda & minutes

*Year group*

*Date and week*

**1. Review of actions from previous minutes**

Outstanding actions:

**2. Escalations**

Stage 1	Action	Review
	FT 1:1	
Stage 2	Action	Review
	PL 1:1	
Stage 3	Action	Review

	PL meet & action plan	
Stage 4	Action	Review
	Referral	
<p><b>3. update on omitted students</b>  <i>Review current list &amp; remove if required</i>  <i>New students to add</i></p>		
<p><b>4. Update on long term absences</b>  <i>Review current long term absences</i>  <i>Discuss updates and next steps</i>  <i>Date of last meeting and of last “eyes on”</i></p>		

5. AOB

