Merchant Taylors' School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Custodian: *Senior Master*
Approving Body: *MTS Senior Leadership Team*
Approved: *November 2026*
(This policy does not apply to Merchant Taylors' Prep.)

Context

This policy has regard to the DfE statutory guidance on school attendance and registration, Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026.

Key Personnel

The School's Senior Attendance Champion is the Senior Master, Dr Adam Clarke, who can be contacted via email at arhc@mtsn.org.uk. The Senior Attendance Champion regularly monitors attendance and evaluates progress, including the efficacy of the School's registration processes and attendance strategies.

The first point of contact for matters of absence from School should be the School Registration Secretary, Ms Newcombe, who can be contacted via email (jnewcombe@mtsn.org.uk) or phone (01923 845536).

Advice on strategies for how to best to promote individual pupil attendance can be obtained from:

The Lower Master, Mr Manley, for pupils in year 7 (jdm@mtsn.org.uk)
The Head of Lower School, Mrs Lemoine, for pupils in year 8 and 9 (ejl@mtsn.org.uk)
The Head of Middle School, Dr Hesketh, for pupils in year 10 and 11 (rbcbh@mtsn.org.uk)
The Head of Upper School, Mr Herring, for pupils in year 12 and 13 (mth@mtsn.org.uk)

These teachers may also be contacted through School reception (email: info@mtsn.org.uk or telephone 01923 820644).

Procedures for Parents

First day of unplanned absence
If a pupil is absent from school at short notice, parents are asked that to contact the School Registration Secretary as soon as possible after 8am to explain the pupil's absence.

Subsequent days of unplanned absence
For each subsequent day parents are asked to contact the School Registration Secretary as above for each day of the absence.

Planned requests for absence

Parents wishing to request their son be absent from school for any period of time are asked to the Senior Master as soon as possible but at least three days before the planned absence in question. The circumstances in which the School will authorise absences are detailed later in this policy.

Expectations of Pupils & Processes for Registration

Morning registration

Pupils are expected to be at the location of their first commitment at the start of each day which is 8.35am, where they will be registered. Details can be found in the online School calendar. Pupils who arrive after 8.35am will be registered as Late (L). Morning registration closes at 9am. Pupils arriving to school after 9am should report to the Registration Secretary in School Reception. Those pupils who arrive at School after 9.00am and are avoidably late will have their registration recorded as *Arrived in school after registration closed* (U), which for statistical purposes is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

School Coaches: Pupils who arrive after 8.35am who were on a delayed school coach should first report to the Registration Secretary in School Reception to be registered, before heading to their first commitment.

Afternoon Registration

All pupils are expected to be at the location of their period 5 lesson by 2.40pm, where they will be registered. This includes days when lesson 5 is devoted to Games. Pupils who arrive after 2.40pm will be registered as Late (L). Afternoon registration closes at 3.10pm. The School day ends at 3.40pm.

Persistent Lateness

The School monitors lateness. Pupils who are repeatedly and avoidably late might expect to be in receipt of a School sanction.

Unexplained Absence

Pupils not registered as present and who are otherwise unaccounted for are followed up by the School Registration Secretary, initially by emailing that pupil's morning teachers and then by calling parents. If a pupil is still unaccounted for then pastoral staff are informed and a consideration is made about whether to implement the School's *Missing Pupil Procedure*.

Monitoring of Attendance

Merchant Taylors' School conducts data analysis of attendance data at least monthly, looking at patterns and trends within pupil cohorts, for individual pupils, and in types of absence. This data is shared by the Senior Attendance Champion with pastoral staff who can then target attendance improvement efforts on those who need it most.

Supporting and Promoting Attendance

The benefits of high attendance are visibly demonstrated to all pupils throughout school life at MTS, principly by ensuring that each hour of each day is shown to bring value. In line with DfE and Local Authority guidance attendance rates are classified as follows:

95% and above	No concerns; this is the minimum expectation for all pupils
90-95%	Potential concerns

90% and below	Persistent absence
50% and below	Severe absence

Individual attendance patterns are monitored closely by pastoral staff, who will work directly with the pupil and their family in all cases whenever there are emerging concerns about absence. Where appropriate the School will work together with external support agencies to support families in helping pupils return to education. In certain cases of persistent absence and severe absence the School will notify the local authority in line with their statutory obligations and the thresholds laid out by them.

The School will also notify the local authority when a pupil has missed a total of 15 days (whether consecutive or cumulative) during a school year through illness.

Merchant Taylors' School does not engage with the National Framework for penalty notices in cases where absence is not authorised.

In line with government guidance (Remote Education), the provision of remote education will only be considered as a last resort and pupils should not expect remote access to lessons when they are absent.

Authorising Pupil Absence

Procedures for parents who wish to request absence for their child are detailed above. The School can authorise absence for a pupil in specific circumstances:

- **Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad**, in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA);
- **Attending a medical or dental appointment**: parents are encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment;
- **Attending an interview**: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with;
- **Study leave**: for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with;
- **A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable**: where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable;
- **Exceptional circumstances**: Merchant Taylors' can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at its discretion. Absence must be requested in advance (no later than 8.35am on the first day for which absence is requested) by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives. Merchant Taylors' is expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be authorised to be away from school;

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the

purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

The DfE requires that leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in a protest activity during school hours.

Planned Absence (inc. Open Days):

Prior permission from the Senior Master is required for all planned absences from School. Upper School boys are allowed to miss up to two days of school per academic year to attend scheduled university Open Days, beginning from the Summer Term of the Lower Sixth year. A written request to the Senior Master as soon as possible but, at least three days before the planned absence in question.

Leaving the school site:

No pupil below the Upper Sixth Form is allowed to leave the school site without express permission of a member of staff. If this is granted, it must be communicated to the Registration Secretary. The pupil(s) in question should then follow the procedure outlined below for pupils in the U6th.

Upper Sixth Form pupils may leave the school site during lunchtime, but need to be present on site for their lesson 5 commitment. Failure to follow the correct procedure below, or abuse of this privilege, will see it rescinded.

Any pupil that leaves the School site for any reason during the School day should 'sign out' via the Registration Secretary in Main Reception, and then 'sign in' when they return.

Lateness and Data Publication:

Pupils who are repeatedly and avoidably late might expect to be in receipt of a School sanction.

At the end of each month, the Attendance Secretary prints a Monthly Attendance Register (as required by law). This is bound and stored in the school safe and kept for a minimum of six years. Ongoing individual pupil attendance summaries can be viewed by pupils, their parents and teachers in MySchool Portal. There is a 24 hour delay in updating the data to this portal.

Sharing of Attendance Data

Merchant Taylors' will work with local authorities and other local partners and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to the pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familial harms). Further, to facilitate timely collaborative working across partners, all schools are also legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

- New Pupil and Deletion returns: notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times.
- Attendance returns: providing the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G – holiday, authorised absence not granted by the school; N – reason for absence not yet established; O – absent in other or unknown circumstances; U – arrived in school after registration closed).

- Sickness returns: providing the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age (this includes pupils up to the end of National Curriculum year 11) who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. Only one sickness return per pupil is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year. This is to help the school and local authority to agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend because of health needs, in line with the statutory guidance on education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.

Local authorities may seek more frequent or comprehensive sharing of data than the statutory minimum where it is essential to fulfilling their obligations under the relevant Education Acts.

Appendix 1: National Attendance and Absence Codes

On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil whose name is listed in the admission register at the time. Further details of how each code is used and interpreted can be found in Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026.

Attending the school

Code	Definition
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session / afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed

Attending a place other than school

Code	Definition
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority[1][2]
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity[3]

Absent - leave of absence

Code	Definition
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered at another school
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance[4]

Absent - other authorised reasons

Code	Definition
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded

Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

Code	Definition
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements

[1] A pupil attending provision arranged by the School rather than the local authority must be recorded using Codes P or B instead.
[2] In line with the DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance Statutory Guidance, Schools must also record the nature of the provision.
[3] In line with the DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance Statutory Guidance, Schools must also record the nature of the approved educational activity.
[4] Where flexi-schooling is agreed and the school has authorised absence for the sessions not attended, these should be recorded using code C.

Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause[5]

Absent - unauthorised absence

Code	Definition
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established[6]
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative codes

Code	Definition
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

[5] This includes absence due to the non-payment of fees

[6] In line with the DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance Statutory Guidance, code N must not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, Schools must amend the pupil's record to Code O.