



Attendance Policy

Principles:

Our students are often those who have become acutely dis-engaged from learning and as such are often those who have very poor records of attendance. We have a commitment to support every student and their parent/carers to overcome any problems and work towards full attendance by:

- Providing a safe and secure environment where students want to attend
- Offering a stimulating and positive learning experience
- Addressing social and academic needs to raise self-esteem
- Rewarding students for improved attendance

Parents of registered students of compulsory school age have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to make sure that they attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from Malden Oaks is an offence and parents may be reported to the Education Authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

Every half-day absence from Malden Oaks has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from Malden Oaks for illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which Malden Oaks does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes keeping students off unnecessarily; truancy; absences which have never been properly explained and students who arrive at Malden Oaks too late to get a mark.

Where there are problems with regular attendance we initially work with parents and the student to resolve them. If a student is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absences or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Parents are expected to contact Malden Oaks at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems together. This is nearly always successful. If problems cannot be sorted out in this way, Malden Oaks may refer the student to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents or students may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask their advice. They are independent of the Malden Oaks and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.



Procedures

Malden Oaks applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Illness and other legitimate reasons

If a student is unfit to attend Malden Oaks, parents/carers should contact the school by telephone before 9.45am on each day of absence. If contact by the parent/carer is not made, Malden Oaks staff will contact the parents by text informing them that their child has not arrived at school and asking them for an update. If there is still no contact from the parent/carer a follow up phone call is made. Once the reason for absence is obtained, this will be recorded on SIMS and the appropriate mark made in the register. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a student's illness, such as a doctor's note, may be requested. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the Deputy Headteacher each time. Absences for shopping, looking after other children or day trips will not be authorised. Leave may however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

If a student is absent for five days without any contact from the parent/carer a Child Missing Education Referral will be made to the Children's Services Single Point of Access by the Deputy Headteacher.

Lateness

Students must attend on time to be given a mark for that session. Parents are expected to ensure that students are present at registration. Late arrival, after the register has closed, without good reason is counted as unauthorised absence. If a student arrives late the parent/carer is informed of the time of arrival by text.

Absconding from Malden Oaks

Any student who has been registered at Malden Oaks and subsequently leaves the premises without permission will be deemed to have absconded. Parents or carers will be informed immediately and it will be explained to the parent that it is their responsibility to find their child. If contact cannot be made with the parent/carer, the police may be informed if there is a concern that the student may be missing, or at risk of harm.

Monitoring of attendance and punctuality

Tutors are responsible for monitoring the attendance and punctuality of their tutees. They have regular conversations with each student, showing them their registration certificate, and setting targets for improvement where necessary. Tutors discuss serious concerns with the Deputy Headteacher. Attendance is routinely discussed with parents at the student's academic review and targets set.

The Deputy Head teacher has responsibility for overseeing the attendance of all students and holds regular meetings with the Educational Welfare Officers to discuss students whose attendance is a cause of concern. Joint meetings may then be held with the EWO, student and Deputy Headteacher. If the student's

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Investing in success

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attendance remains a cause of concern an official referral is made to the Educational Welfare Service which may result in legal action.

Rewards for attendance/punctuality

Students with the highest attendance are recognised on the school achievement board and a half termly prize is awarded, by the Headteacher, to the student with the best attendance record. Students whose attendance improves are also rewarded.

Students who arrive on time for school are rewarded with a counter which they can use to purchase items in the school café.

Summary

Malden Oaks has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Various initiatives may be introduced from time to time as required. If a student is not in regular attendance, they are being deprived of their right to an education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. At Malden Oaks we are committed to working collaboratively with parents and students, to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Encouraging good attendance and punctuality is part of our duty to prepare students for Post 16 college and future employment.

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be implemented throughout the school.