



Attendance Policy

Written by:	Head	Autumn 2024
Approved by:	Council	Spring 2025

Key School contact

The School's Senior Attendance Champion (SAC) is the Head, email: head@menuhinschool.co.uk.

Aims

This is the attendance policy of The Yehudi Menuhin School. Thanks to the efforts of pupils, parents and staff the School has for many years achieved high levels of attendance from all its pupils. Good attendance is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- to maintain a whole school culture that continues to promote the benefits of good attendance;
- to ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil in the School is able to benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the School;
- to prioritise improve attendance and punctuality across the School, and set out the School's approach to the management of absence / non-attendance;
- to recognise the linkages between attendance / absence and pupil wellbeing, specifically ensuring a consistent whole school approach to safeguarding; and
- to help to promote a whole school culture of safety, equality and protection.

Scope and application

This policy applies to the whole School. Amongst other things it addresses the specific statutory obligations on the School to record attendance and absence.

Regulatory framework

This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- Education and Skills Act 2008;
- Children Act 1989;
- Childcare Act 2006;
- Sponsorship Duties (UKVI, July 2023);
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Equality Act 2010; and
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, applies from 19 August 2024);
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE, applies from 19 August 2024);
- Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance (DfE, September 2023);
- Guidance for parents on school attendance (Office of the Children's Commissioner, September 2023);
- 'Is my child too ill for school?' guidance (NHS, April 2024);
- Keeping children safe in education (DfE, September 2024);
- School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures (DfE, May 2020);
- Children missing education (DfE, September 2016);
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (DfE, August 2017);
- Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, February 2024);
- Mental health and behaviour in schools (DfE, November 2018);
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (DfE, February 2023);
- Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (DfE, February 2023);
- Remote education guidance (DfE, updated February 2023); and
- SEND Code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department of Health, May 2015).

The following School policies, procedures and resource materials are relevant to this policy:

- Safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures;
- Missing child policy and procedures;
- SEND Policy;
- Behaviour and discipline policies and practice; and
- Parent Contract.

Publication and availability

This policy is published on the School website, and is available in hard copy on request.

Definitions and interpretation

Where the following words or phrases are used in this policy:

- references to attendance include references to attendance for all or part of the timetabled school day.
- references to a Parent means: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a pupil; and any person who has day to day responsibility for a pupil (i.e. lives with and looks after a pupil).

- references to a pupil includes anyone who is receiving an education at the school
- SAC means the School's Senior Attendance Champion who is the Head.

Responsibility statement and allocation of tasks

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for all matters which are the subject of this policy. The Board of Governors recognises that maintaining attendance is a school leadership issue and has appointed a designated senior leader to have overall responsibility for championing attendance in School, referred to in this policy as the SAC.

To ensure the efficient discharge of its responsibilities under this policy, the Board of Governors has allocated the following tasks to the SAC, in collaboration with the Deputy Head (Pastoral):

- Keeping the policy up to date and compliant with the law and good practice
- As required, and at least termly monitoring the implementation of the policy
- As required, and at least termly, seeking input from interested groups (such as pupils, staff, parents) to consider improvements to the School's processes under the policy
- As required, and at least annually, a formal review of the policy

The importance of good attendance

The School recognises the importance of maintaining good patterns of attendance. This is an integral part of the School's ethos and culture.

In building a culture of good school attendance it recognises:

- the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life;
- the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions and / or disabilities, mental health issues, safeguarding wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged pupils;
- the importance of setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly and effectively to pupils and parents;
- that attendance, while rarely a problem at the School historically, is never "solved" and is a continual process requiring revision and updating of messages, processes and strategies; and
- children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

School responsibilities

The School acknowledges that attendance is an essential foundation to securing positive outcomes for all pupils and that everyone has a responsibility to take proactive steps to manage and improve attendance across the School community. The School will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, setting high expectations for every pupil and consistently communicating those expectations to pupils and parents.

If there are challenges to attendance, the School will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them.

The School will respond to non-attendance and / or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, having regard to this policy, the School's safeguarding and behaviour policies and the School's terms and conditions. It will act in a proportionate and targeted way in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed.

The School will have robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups in order to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance and those who are persistently absent and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.

Staff responsibilities

The Head is the SAC, who has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. The SAC's responsibilities are:

- to set a clear vision for maintaining attendance in school;
- to establish and maintain effective systems for tackling any absence and make sure the systems are followed by all staff;
- to regularly monitor the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes;
- to have oversight of and analyse attendance data; and
- to communicate clear messages on the importance of attendance to pupils and parents.

The boarding staff have day-to-day responsibility for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. They should:

- have a formal routine for registers being taken accurately each morning, afternoon and evening;
- seek explanations of absences from pupils on their return to School;
- make enquiries about unexplained absences, including those within the school day, and follow up with a pupil or pupils to ensure that an explanation has been formally given to the School;
- look out for trends or patterns in a pupil's attendance and inform the SAC of any specific concerns;

- deal with lateness to lessons consistently and promptly;
- consider appropriate sanctions for pupils who arrive late to a lesson in line with the School's behaviour and discipline policies; and
- discuss non-attendance and / or lateness with pupils and parents (where possible) and emphasise the importance of punctuality and attendance.

The School ensures that all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance and are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents about it. The School provides appropriate training and professional development for staff consistent with their roles and responsibilities.

School arrangements

The School will accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day-to-day processes in place to follow up absence. These registers must be kept electronically. Registration is at meal-times: breakfast, lunch, and supper. (On Sundays and at Flexeats breakfast and lunch are replaced by brunch.)

Monitoring attendance

The School will undertake regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils that need it, and to look at any emerging patterns across the School and develop strategies to address them.

Such analysis may include:

- monitoring and analysing weekly attendance patterns and trends and provide support in a targeted way to pupils and families;
- using this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including the special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding lead);
- conducting thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends;
- benchmarking attendance data at whole school, year group and group level to identify areas of focus for any necessary improvement;
- devising specific strategies to address any areas of poor attendance identified through data;
- monitoring the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented; and
- providing data and reports to the Board of Governors to support its work.

Pupil responsibilities

School attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing and development. The School therefore has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance and has systems in place to manage any poor attendance. Pupils should be aware that:

- they are expected to be present in person for the duration of each School day;
- they are expected to arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons;
- they should not leave a lesson or the School site without permission or otherwise in accordance with School rules;
- they should engage with the School's arrangements for recording and managing attendance;
- any unexplained absence will be followed up;
- persistent lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the School.

This action may take the form of:

- offers of support to seek to identify and address any barriers to attendance;
- communication with parents;
- reporting to other agencies such as children's social care; and
- sanctions against them or their parents in line with the School's behaviour policies.

If pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending School or specific lessons regularly, they may speak to any member of staff, although the School encourages them to speak to their Tutor or other pastoral/boarding staff.

Pupils are entitled to expect this information to be managed sensitively.

Additional needs

The School recognises that, although historically it has not been the case at YMS, some pupils may find it harder than others to attend School, and will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

The School will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability that puts them at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with pupils without a disability, in relation to school attendance. It will also work with parents, and where appropriate with external agencies including the local authority, to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities e.g. ensuring the provision outlined in a pupils education, health and care plan is accessed.

Suitable strategies will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance. Where barriers are outside the School's control, the

School will work with parents and pupils to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for early help.

The School will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness, or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days. 15.

Parent / carer responsibilities

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education. This means pupils must attend every day that the School is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the School.

The School will help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development and provide clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance. Expectations the School places on parents can be found in Appendix 1 of this policy.

Parents are bound by the terms relating to conduct and attendance in the parent contract and failure to ensure a child's attendance or engage with the School about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the parent is treating the School unreasonably. The school's Terms and Conditions are the first port of call in the case of persistent absence.

At the same time, the school reserves the right to draw up a Parental Contract, under the terms outlined in 'School Attendance Responsibility Measures'. Any such agreement is voluntary but non-compliance will be recorded and the information shared with the appropriate authorities.

Staff training

The School ensures that regular guidance and training on attendance is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff understand what is expected of them under this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles.

As a minimum this will include all staff understanding:

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances; and

- the School's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance.

Dedicated attendance training is provided to any member of staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders.

This should include:

- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers;
- the process for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it;
- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data; and
- any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil groups overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

The School maintains written records of all staff training.

Information sharing

Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education.

The School, local authorities and other local partners should work jointly and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to a pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familial harms). Where appropriate the School will attend regular targeting support meetings.

The School shares information from the registers with the local authority as required, including but not limited to:

- New pupil and departures returns; and
- Attendance returns.

The law allows local authority officers access to the attendance and admission registers of all types of schools to carry out their functions under the Education Acts to support joint working between schools and local authorities. These officers are also permitted to take digital or physical extracts of the School's registers.

The School must provide specific pupil information on request to the Secretary of State.

Where appropriate, the School is expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences.

Record keeping and confidentiality

All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records. The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. The School's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The School has published privacy notices on its website which explain how the School will use personal data.

Appendix 1: School arrangements

1.1 Managing attendance

The School monitors, records electronically and shares data about pupil attendance as part of its duty to promote attendance and safeguard and protect pupils.

It accurately completes admission and attendance registers as required by law and set out in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 respectively.

The admission and attendance registers must be kept electronically and retained by the School for the relevant time period as stated by law.

Registration takes place three times per day, at meal-times (or twice when breakfast and lunch are replaced by brunch).

For absences known in advance, parents should fill out an External Activity Form (EAF) for permission of absence. If possible this should be at least a fortnight before the event.

Permission will be granted for major family events such as funerals, weddings of immediate family and significant religious events/festivals, as well as musical and academic commitments.

Permission for absence will not normally be granted for anything which might be considered to constitute an extension of holiday.

For absences on the day, such as illness, parents are required to alert boarding staff that their child will be absent from school for all or part of that day.

Medical appointments are usually known a little in advance and absence requests for these are conducted in the normal way. If a pupil is absent from school, and there is no cause known, duty staff are responsible for ascertaining where the pupil is, either in school but not registered or not in school.

The appropriate code will be recorded on the School's iSAMS data management system once the pupil's whereabouts is established.

Registration codes follow the guidance set out in 'Working together to improve school attendance', from August 2024.

If a pupil persistently does not register, or persistently registers late, appropriate action is taken to ensure that registration takes place in a timely and appropriate fashion. The School should ensure that, if required, the Missing Pupil Policy is put into action as early as possible on any given day.

It is a requirement to follow Surrey County Council guidance in notification to authorities of the permanent absence of a pupil.

The School expects all pupils to be present at School for the whole of the School day, usually from 07:45 for 18:25 for day pupils (07:45 to 16:15 for Ds), but this period may be extended, for example for school clubs and activities, sports fixtures or school trips.

Registration is processed out on a day-to-day basis by boarding staff, under the direct guidance of the Registrar, who is the iSAMS administrator. The IT Dept are responsible for ensuring that the Attendance Register and the School Roll is maintained and supported electronically as required.

1.2 The role of parents / carers

The School expects all Parents to:

- make any application for an authorised leave of absence at the earliest opportunity;
- notify the School of any absence or delay as soon as reasonably possible in accordance with this policy and when doing so, give an accurate explanation for this; and
- cooperate with the School to explore possible barriers to attendance and to improve it where attendance has been raised as an issue.

Parents of day pupils should ensure their child attends School in good time for the start of the day for each day of the published term days in the school year.

Any measures taken by the School to aid day-pupil parents in ensuring the attendance of their children do not imply the school taking on responsibility from parents for getting children to school on time and for each day of the published term days in the school year.

Term dates are published at least a year in advance, are available on the school website, and any changes within this timeframe will be passed on to parents by email. Changes made will be taken into consideration when it comes to absence requests.

1.3 Registration and attendance checks

Morning registration takes place during breakfast, from 0700 to 0800, when the window for registration closes.

Afternoon registration takes place during lunch, from 1215 to 1300, when the window for registration closes.

Evening registration takes place during supper, from 1800 to 1900, when the window for registration closes.

On days when brunch replaces breakfast and lunch (Sundays and during Flexeats), morning registration takes place during brunch, from 1030 to 1200, when the window for registration closes.

Registers will also be called at the beginning of each lesson in order to identify and follow up on absences from lessons.

1.4 Reporting absence

For absences on the day, such as illness, parents are required to contact boarding staff that their child will be absent from school that day. Parents should continue to report their child's absence for each day of the absence. Where a pupil is ill, the School should be notified of the nature of the illness.

1.5 Arrangements for reporting subsequent absence

Absence will be recorded on the Attendance Register as set out in Appendix 3.

1.6 Managing absence

Duty boarding staff follow up on the whereabouts of missing pupils if parents haven't been in touch. They generate a daily attendance report which is posted to all staff on the Virtual Staff Team. This may be updated several times each day.

The SAC (Head) and Deputy Head (Pastoral) monitor the School Attendance Register and discuss any concerns and actions required.

1.7 Authorised absences

Authorised absence means that the School has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away (usually through an EAF) or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Apart from illness or absence requested through an EAF, no pupil should be away from School without prior permission from the boarding staff or Head. Dental or medical appointments should be made during School holidays where possible; permission for absence for routine or emergency medical appointments may be granted. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Head and senior leadership to determine the length of the time the pupil is permitted to be away from School. It will be recorded as an authorised absence.

1.8 Reporting duties

The School has statutory reporting obligations if a pupil fails to regularly attend and their absence is unauthorised. The School must report unauthorised absences for a continuous period of 10 days or more, as well as 15 days' absence through sickness, to the local authority.

In the event that a pupil holding a Student or Child Student visa sponsored by the School under the Points Based System goes missing, the School will report to UKVI if the pupil misses ten consecutive expected contact points. Each time the School's attendance register is completed it is treated as a contact point for these purposes. The report will be made by the School's Level 1 user via the Sponsor Management and in accordance with prevailing UKVI guidance

Action will also be taken in accordance with the Missing child policy and safeguarding and child protection policy if any absence of a pupil from the School gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

Appendix 2: Admission register

1.1 Admission register

In accordance with the requirements of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 the School will:

- maintain an admission register of all pupils (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) admitted to the School (also known as the school roll); and
- inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the School's admission register at non-standard transition points.

The Registrar is responsible for maintaining the School Roll and ensuring that it is up to date. A number of staff will typically be informed of changes in the School Roll: the Head and Leadership Team will always be kept informed.

The Registrar and Head are responsible for ensuring that the school's legal obligations with regard to the School Roll are maintained; they will inform Surrey County Council (and, when appropriate, other local or national authorities) of changes in accordance with safeguarding regulations established by them. This is typically done via the Attendance Inclusion Officer.

The Head and Registrar are responsible for ensuring that the School is up to date with all such requirements. The admissions register must be kept electronically and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.

The School must ensure that every entry in the School's admission register is preserved for six years beginning with the day on which the entry was made; and every back-up copy of the register is preserved for six years after the end of the school year that it relates to.

The admissions register contains specific personal details of every pupil in the School, including their date of admission, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school they last attended.

A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. When any of the situations set out in regulation 9 occurs, the pupil's name must be deleted.

Where the School notifies the local authority that the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the School must provide it with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the address of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with;
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives or can be contacted in an emergency;

- the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- the name of the pupil's other or future school and pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable;
- the ground (prescribed in regulation 9) under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

Appendix 3: Attendance register

1.1 Attendance register

The School records and monitors the attendance of all pupils (both of compulsory and non-compulsory school age) in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024.

The School uses the appropriate national attendance and absence codes system to enable it to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with regulation 10 of the Attendance Regulations.

The attendance register is kept electronically and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.

The School will also use these records to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) and work with pupils and parents to resolve any issues before they become entrenched.

The School is required by law to take attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. At YMS we register pupils three times a day on most days. On each occasion it will be recorded whether every pupil is:

- physically present in school when the attendance register begins to be taken; or
- absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended; or
- attending a place other than the school; or
- absent.

The circumstances in which a pupil may be recorded as attending a place, other than the school, can include:

- Attending educational provision arranged by a local authority;

- For an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff;
- Attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity;
- Attending an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by the school as part of the pupil's education;
- Attending a place for any other approved educational activity.

1.2 Recording absence

Absence will be recorded in accordance with the national absence codes set out in regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024, and statutory guidance, Working together to improve school attendance relating to:

- leaves of absence;
- other authorised reasons;
- unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause;
- unauthorised absence.

1.3 Remote education

The School is required to record all absence from in-person lessons. The School may, in limited circumstances, provide remote education to enable pupils, who are well enough to learn but unable to attend the School site, to keep pace with their education.

In the limited circumstances when the School decides to use remote education for individual pupils when they are absent, the following will be considered:

- ensuring mutual agreement of remote education by the School, parents or carers, potentially pupils, and if appropriate a relevant medical professional. If the pupil has an Education, Health and Care plan or has a social worker, the local authority should also be involved in the decision;
- if remote education is being used as part of a plan to reintegrate back to school, putting a formal arrangement in place to review its efficacy regularly, alongside identifying what other support and flexibilities can be put in place to help ease the pupil back to school at the earliest opportunity;
- setting a time limit within which the period of remote education provision should be reviewed, with the aim that the pupil returns to in person education with the required support in place to meet their needs. Pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code.

The School will keep a record of, and monitor pupil's engagement with remote education, but this is not formally tracked in the attendance register. Where appropriate, this information may be used to make plans for a pupil's reintegration to school. The School will utilise a digital

education platform that will be kept up-to-date and keep pupils safe. Staff will remain trained and confident in its use.

1.4 Unauthorised absence

The “unauthorised absence” code will be used when prior permission for absence has not been given and where the School is not satisfied with the explanation given for absence or delayed attendance meaning that the code for “unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance” is not appropriate.

Examples include:

- holiday has not been authorised by the School or is in excess of the period determined by the Head;
- No EAF was submitted and approved;
- the reason for absence has not been provided;
- a pupil is absent from school without authorisation;
- a pupil has arrived in school after registration has closed and without reasonable explanation.

The Head, supported by the boarding staff, is responsible for Absence Requests and following up unauthorized absences or other matters as appropriate. As appropriate, such matters may be delegated to other members of staff e.g. the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or Heads of Section.