



St Mary  
Magdalene  
Academy

# THE COURTYARD

## ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

*The Courtyard aims to offer an outstanding educational and social provision that will equip our students with the skills and experiences needed to discover and live out their potential.*

# The Courtyard

## ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Courtyard seeks to ensure that all of its students receive a full education, which maximises the opportunities for inclusion and achievement at school so that each student is able to realise his/her full potential.

Students, parents/carers, teachers, support staff and governors all have a role in maintaining a high standard of attendance and punctuality.

***EVERY LESSON COUNTS! EVEN CASUAL ABSENCE CAN AFFECT YOUR CHILD'S ATTAINMENT.***

#### **Aims of the Policy**

- To improve the overall attendance of students at the Courtyard.
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities for all people involved in maintaining student attendance and punctuality.
- To implement a system of sanctions and rewards.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and responding to attendance data.

### 2. RECORDING ATTENDANCE DATA

#### **Registers**

- The registers are completed by 8:45am in the morning and at 1.30pm.
- Registers close at 8:45am. Arrival after this time may be marked as an absence.
- All lateness must be marked with an **L** and the time. If a student arrives after the register closes without an acceptable explanation, it is marked with an **N** and is considered as an unauthorised absence. So it is imperative to phone before 8:45am to explain the reason for the absence.
- If a staff member receives information about attendance or lateness, they are to inform the Courtyard Office staff.

#### **Computerised Data**

The information in the registers is entered daily onto the computer by the Courtyard Office staff.

### 3. ABSENCE

#### **Authorised Absence**

An authorised absence is when a student is away for a reason acceptable to the school. The Courtyard (not the parent/carer) determines whether an absence is authorised after receipt of a written explanation from the parent/carer. Explanations from students are not sufficient.

## **Unauthorised Absence**

The Courtyard will follow up on all unauthorised absences, communicating parental responsibility for providing explanations.

- First day telephone calls
- Unauthorised absence letter.

## **Parents/Carers are strongly discouraged from taking their children away during term time.**

- Special leave of absence can be authorised at the Headteacher's discretion. Longer periods of absence may only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances.
- Any requests for leave of absence for medical appointments or religious observance will go to the Courtyard Headteacher.
- If a parent/carer feels it is absolutely unavoidable to take their child out of school for leave of absence, they must complete an absence request form, in advance, for consideration by the Headteacher.
- Any special leave of absence including a request for a child to be out of school can only be authorised by the Headteacher.
- Each case will be considered individually based on the nature of the event, history of term time absences, the student's current attendance, age, achievement, and the time of year with respect to the curriculum. Parents/carers will be informed in writing of the decision on their request.
- Any time taken without the Courtyard's authorisation, or any additional time taken over and above the amount authorised will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- If a student does not return on the agreed date, the Courtyard will make every effort to contact the family by telephone and in writing. If no contact is made, or if the absence has been extended for anything other than unavoidable circumstances, the school will refer the family to the Islington Access and Engagement Service (AES) if they do not return within 10 school days. If no contact is made with the family by AES then a letter will be sent to the parent/carer informing them that the student has been taken off roll; this will always be done in consultation with AES.

## **4. PUNCTUALITY**

- School starts at 8:45am. It is expected that all students arrive in good time.
- If students arrive after 8:45am they must come straight to the Courtyard office to record their attendance.
- If your child has not arrived by 9:00am, a member of staff will contact you by telephone. In addition to monitoring absence, this is also a safety check.
- A late letter will automatically be sent to parents/carers if there is regular lateness.
- All unauthorised lates (those after the register closes) are treated as absences.

## **5. MONITORING ATTENDANCE AND RESPONDING TO PATTERNS OF ABSENCE**

Courtyard staff will respond when a pattern of low attendance emerges.

- The Courtyard is responsible for initial interventions. When a pattern of poor attendance emerges, the Headteacher will determine a course of action.

- If the Headteacher makes initial contact with a parent/carer and there is no improvement, a meeting will be arranged to discuss the matter further. If there is still no improvement after suitable interventions by the school, the AES may become involved.
- Although all cases are considered individually, the AES will generally become involved when a student's attendance falls below 85%.
- To ensure that all patterns of low attendance are identified, the AES will meet with the school's named attendance person each half term to discuss and agree a course of action for all students with attendance under 90%. The agreed action may include:
  - Closely monitoring the situation
  - A letter from the school
  - A meeting with the school (possibly with the AES present)
  - A formal referral to AES (which can include home visits, referrals to outside agencies and statutory action)
- A series of standard letters are available to be sent to parents/carers.

## **6. SUPPORTING THE REINTEGRATION OF STUDENTS AFTER EXTENDED ABSENCES**

All students who return to school after an extended period of absence need to be supported. Each case will be considered individually and a plan will be drawn up to best support the student's academic and social reintegration into the Courtyard.

## **7. TAKING STUDENTS OFF ROLL**

- All students who leave the Courtyard to attend another school will remain on roll until their admission elsewhere is confirmed.
- In the case of students who disappear (i.e. leave with no indication of where they are going or whether they will return), the Courtyard will make every effort to contact the family on the telephone and in writing. If contact cannot be established, the Courtyard will make a formal referral to the Islington Access and Engagement Service.

## **8. ENCOURAGING GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

Whole school activities will raise the profile of attendance and punctuality through.

- Reports
- Certificates for 100% and most improved attendance for each term

## **9. COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS/CARERS**

It is essential the parents/carers of all students understand the Courtyard's attendance policy and their role in ensuring their child has good attendance.

- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their children arrive at school on time each day.
- Parents/carers must contact the Courtyard in person or on the telephone to provide an explanation on the first day their child is absent.

- A leaflet will be sent to all parents/carers giving a brief outline of the Courtyard's attendance policy, the Courtyard's expectations of them and the general importance of good attendance. This leaflet will be given to all new parents/carers in the future.

## ATTENDANCE AND LATENESS POLICY CONTRACT

### POOR ATTENDANCE LEADS TO POOR ATTAINMENT

The staff and governors of the Courtyard believe that regular attendance at school is essential if children are to receive the education to which they are entitled and which they deserve. Children who are regularly away from school, or who are persistently late, will not achieve the progress that they should.

### 1) AIMS OF CONTRACT

*At the Courtyard we aim to:*

- 1.1 Ensure that every student achieves attendance of at least 95%.
- 1.2 Ensure that every student arrives at school on time (8:45am) every day with immediate effect.
- 1.3 Minimise the number of families taking special leave of absence in term time.

### 2) OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY CONTRACT

*To fulfil the above aims, the Courtyard will:*

- 2.1 Require that every parent/carer telephones the Courtyard before 8:45am if their child is ill.
- 2.1 Monitor registers daily to check for children who are absent, and whose parents/carers have not telephoned the school. The Courtyard will telephone such parents/carers to remind them that they should telephone the Courtyard if their child is absent and to find out why the child is absent. If a further absence occurs without telephone notification, parents/carers will receive a further letter with a reply slip warning that the Islington Access and Engagement Service may become involved.
- 2.2 Monitor registers daily to check for children who are late, and whose parents/carers have not telephoned the Courtyard to tell us why. Such parents/carers will receive a letter with a reply slip to inform them of the necessity of arriving at school on time. If a further lateness occurs without telephone notification, parents/carers will receive a further letter with a reply slip warning that the Islington Access and Engagement Service may become involved.
- 2.3 Close registers at 8:45am each day, after which a child is counted as absent for the remainder of the morning. Children who are not in school at this time will be marked late for the morning session. Children who continually arrive late seriously disrupt continuity and progress within the class.
- 2.4 Authorise absences only if a child is ill. In some cases, at the Headteacher's discretion, a medical certificate will be required to explain absence. Any other absence will only be authorised if the Headteacher's permission is given in advance. If one child in a family is ill, other children in the family must not be kept at home.
- 2.5 Provide time for parents/carers to discuss attendance or lateness issues with the Headteacher when parents/carers require this.

- 2.6 Will not authorise special leave of absence for any child or family except in exceptional circumstances. Permission for all special leave of absence must be sought from the Headteacher prior to absence.
- 2.7 Will refer to the Islington Access and Engagement Service any child who remains on holiday longer than the agreed holiday dates.
- 2.8 Monitor the return of reply slips from parents/carers regarding attendance or lateness.

**3) Parents/carers whose children are at the Courtyard agree to:**

- 3.1 Keep a child at home only if the child is genuinely ill.
- 3.2 Telephone the school on the first day of a child's absence to explain why the child will not be present by 8:45am.
- 3.3 Ensure that their children arrive at school on time by being in the school by 8:45am each day.
- 3.4 When one child in a family is ill and must be kept at home, send, bring or make arrangements for others to bring to school other children in the family who are well.
- 3.5 Send reply slips from school letters about attendance and lateness back to school promptly.
- 3.6 Make and keep appointments with the Headteacher or the Islington Access and Engagement Service to discuss attendance or lateness issues.
- 3.7 Avoid taking their children on special leave of absence during term time or to do so only with the express permission of the Headteacher.
- 3.8 Ensure their child is at school if the parent is ill. Arrangements for collection will need to be made if no other family member is available.

**4) Students at the Courtyard agree to:**

- 4.1 Get up, wash, brush teeth, dress, have breakfast and be ready to go to school when their parents/carers ask.
- 4.2 Come to school every day when they are not ill.
- 4.3 Arrive at school on time.

Definitions of terms:

**Authorised Absence:** an absence that has been agreed by the Headteacher and has been supported by a medical certificate or acceptable note from a parent/carer explaining the reason for the absence. (Note: not all notes from parents/carers will be accepted and further proof of the reason for absence may be required).

**Unauthorised absence:** an absence where an acceptable reason or proof for absence has not been given or the reason given has not been accepted by the Headteacher or a child has had a holiday during term time.

I have received and read the school attendance and lateness policy and talked about it with my child. (Please return slip to the Courtyard).

Signature of parent/carer:

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Parent's/Carer's name in block capitals:

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Signature of child:

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Child's name in block capitals:

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