

Marland School

Attendance Policy

Review Date: 19th November 2024

To be reviewed: November 2026

Rationale

Marland School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all our students. Our aim to encourage maximum attendance levels so that students are able to take full advantage of the learning opportunities offered to them in our school. We will work closely with parents/carers and students so that all involved recognise the importance of punctuality and good attendance.

Aims

The school attendance policy is designed to fulfil our statutory duties to:

- Ensure consistency of practice through the school
- Give clear guidance to parents, students, staff and others
- Enable the school to review practice
- Encourage full attendance and punctuality
- To record and monitor attendance and apply appropriate strategies to minimise nonattendance

GUIDELINES:

Registers

In accordance with law, registers are marked at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. The register is completed on the SIMS database. Parents/carers are requested to phone the school on the morning of an absence. This is then recorded on the school's database. If we do not receive a call from parents/carers designated Marland staff will make contact, this is recorded on Behaviour Watch if appropriate and always in the school's attendance file.

Parental Support

The role of the parent /carer in supporting the school's efforts in securing high levels of attendance is vital. At Marland we aim to maintain close, effective and positive links with our parents/carers. During the interview of new students and their parents/carers we emphasise the importance of regular attendance and the procedures in case of absence. Parents/carers are requested to try to make any additional medical appointments out of school hours wherever possible. Parents/carers will be notified of any concerns about a child's attendance by designated Marland staff.

Unauthorised Absence

Parents/carers will be notified of any concerns about a child's attendance by designated Marland staff. Ongoing concerns that cannot be resolved satisfactorily in this manner will be referred to the school's link Attendance Improvement Officer for further action. It is acknowledged that an early response to patterns of absence is most effective, as is a co-ordinated multi agency approach to tackling the issue.

Leave in Term time

Authorisation of term time leave can only be given in exceptional circumstances. In accordance with DfE guidance, parents / carers will be made aware of the importance of not taking their child out of school for holidays during the 190 statutory school days and that requests for such leave will not be authorised by school. This is especially important during exam periods (i.e. May / June / early July for Year 10 / Year 11 exams – please refer directly to school diary for exact annual dates).

Monitoring Procedures

Attendance is monitored by the respective Headteacher on each site via the AIO meeting notes feedback proforma.' These sheets will be emailed weekly to the AIO in order to assist monitoring of the registers and to support regular visits. Attendance figures will be reported to the DfE and LA as required.

Role of the LA Attendance Improvement Officer

The AIO operates within a legal framework on behalf of the LA in discharging its legal obligations. They will ensure that the latest Education Act which relates to children receiving efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude is applied with, in line with the LA values, policies and procedures. One of the main objectives is to maintain and improve school attendance and monitor school registers, hold regular consultation with the school staff responsible for attendance and obtain referrals from school. They may follow up referrals by: -

- Communicating with parents/carers by letter or phone
- Arranging a number of home visits
- Liaising with other professionals/agencies

The outcome of any intervention will be communicated back to school.

Parents may wish to contact the AIO themselves to ask for help or information. They can be contacted through Marland Residential School, Marland Secondary School or Marland Primary School.

In cases of persistent poor attendance, the AIO may seek to pursue parents through the legal system. Successful prosecution of parents can lead to fines and/or short-term custodial sentence.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- Marland School will work to provide an environment in which students feel valued and welcomed and that their presence is important.
- A Personalised curriculum will be offered to all students where appropriate. Every effort will be made that learning tasks are matched to students' needs.
- Parents will be reminded regularly via induction meetings, newsletters, and student review meetings, etc. of the importance of good attendance and punctuality, and that action will be taken for persistent lateness or non-attendance.
- In cases of persistent non-attendance school staff may make home visits to work with the student, their parents/carers and any other agency to encourage a return to school.
- Each School Headteacher or the Executive Principal will make a termly report to the school's governing body on attendance matters.
- The SLT and/or designated Marland staff will liaise with link agencies (i.e. Educational Psychology Service, Integrated Children's Services, Child and Family Guidance, etc) when this may serve to support and assist students and families who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Marland School operates a 'first day of absence calling' policy. This means that parents/carers will be informed of a young person's absence on the first instance of absence. The Head of Teaching & Learning will work with the AIO to identify patterns of attendance and to support those young people and families who are experiencing attendance difficulties. Parents will be contacted on each successive day of absence to clarify the ongoing reasons and where appropriate strongly encourage the child's return to school. Parents and students will receive full support from the school to encourage and support good attendance, however where all other proactive measures to re-engage positive attendance have not succeeded, warning letters will be issued which may lead to eventual prosecution of parents.