



# Maharishi School

CONSCIOUSNESS-BASED EDUCATION

## Attendance and absence policy 2024

Date last reviewed: October 2024

Date of next review: October 2025

Reviewed by	Lisa Edwards Headteacher
Reviewed by	Dr. Ian Birnbaum Chair of Governors

## Statement of intent

At Maharishi School, we believe that regular attendance at school is essential to ensure progress and to enable children to unfold their full potential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience.

At Maharishi School, we are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance.
- Rewarding regular attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states **“It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him receive efficient full-time education, suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”**
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.

## Key Areas

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### A. Attendance monitoring procedures

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KEY AREA	
<b>1. Legal framework</b>	<p>This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education Act 1996</li><li>• Equality Act 2010</li><li>• The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)</li><li>• DfE (2020) 'School attendance'</li><li>• DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'</li><li>• DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'</li><li>• DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'</li></ul> <p>This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complaints Procedures Policy</li><li>• Children Missing Education Policy</li><li>• Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy</li><li>• Enabling Good Behaviour Policy</li></ul>
<b>2. Definitions</b>	<p>The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:</p> <p><b>Absence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arrival at school after the register has closed</li><li>• Not attending school for any reason</li></ul> <p><b>Authorised absence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave</li><li>• Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave</li></ul>

- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency for which the school has granted leave

**Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without sufficient reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

**Persistent absenteeism:**

- A pupil becomes a persistent absentee when their cumulative attendance falls below 90% at any point during the school year; whether the absences are authorised or unauthorised.
- When attendance nears this level, children miss significant amounts of schooling (the equivalent to one morning or one afternoon session per week); meaning their educational progress is put at risk.

(In the first month of a new school year, we will not consider a pupil who misses one or two days of school as a persistent absentee, unless there are a significant number of days missed or there has been a pattern of persistent absence previously, in which case, we will take the necessary preventative action).

**3. Roles & responsibilities**

The governing body has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.

- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education 2021' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedure.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The office manager is responsible for informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have been permanently excluded.</li> </ul> <p>Parents are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details, including providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.</li> <li>● Updating the school if their details change.</li> <li>● Promoting good attendance and punctuality with their children.</li> </ul> <p>➤ Primary and secondary phase pupils are expected to arrive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ from 8:50. The school day starts at 9:00</li> </ul> <p>Pupils are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.</li> <li>● Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Training of staff</b></p>	<p>Maharishi School recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.</p> <p>Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.</p> <p>Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.</p>
<p><b>5. Pupil expectations</b></p>	<p>Pupils are expected to attend school every day they are required to be at school. Maharishi School also expects all pupils to attend lessons punctually.</p> <p>Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.</p>

**6. Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)**

Maharishi School will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing PA, the senior management team will:

- Establish a range of interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor interventions and escalation procedures and seek evidence of the interventions and procedures that work.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Communicating with parents.
  - Regularly reviewing the attendance of pupils with PA.
  - Engaging with the Local Authority attendance team.
  - Using fixed penalty notices.
- Attend/lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome the pupil back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meet with parents/the pupil to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead regular check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

We need parents' full support in ensuring attendance does not reach this level. However, if for any reason a child's attendance does fall into this category, parents will be asked to do all they can to improve the situation.

The school will inform the local authority (LA) of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly and all parents with parental responsibility may be issued with a penalty notice.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in Need (CIN)
- Looked After Children (LAC)
- Pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)
- Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

**7. Absence procedures**

Parents are required to contact the school office via telephone before the start of the school day on the first day of their child's absence using the school's absence line (option 1 for primary and option 2 for secondary), giving a reason for their child's absence.

Parents must continue to contact the school on any subsequent days, unless specific arrangements have been agreed by the headteacher.

In the case of illness, the reason must be specified. 'Not well/Feeling ill' is not enough information. A member of the admin team will call or text parents for more information in such cases. If it is not possible to make contact with parents for further information, the absence will not be authorised. Please help us to avoid this unnecessary administrative task by giving full details of the reason for the absence during the initial contact.

A telephone call or text will be made to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ascertain the reason for the absence, thereby identifying the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system</li> <li>● Identify whether the absence is authorised or not</li> <li>● Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken</li> </ul> <p>If your child is absent due to vomiting, they should not return to school for 48 hours after the last bout of sickness. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.</p> <p>Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.</p>
<p><b>8. Parental involvement</b></p>	<p>The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. the early help team, social services, etc.</p> <p>Parents will be expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Treat staff with respect.</li> <li>● Actively support the work of the school.</li> <li>● Call staff for help when they need it.</li> <li>● Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child’s attendance or require support.</li> </ul>
<p><b>9. Attendance register</b></p>	<p>Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Present.</li> </ul>

- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

	<p>Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.</p>
<p><b>10. Attendance team</b></p>	<p>If pupils are at risk of being persistently absent, they will be referred to the attendance team, which consists of the headteacher, the primary and secondary deputies, the family support worker and the attendance administrator, who will attempt to resolve the situation by working with parents.</p> <p>If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the attendance team will refer the matter to the LA attendance team which may result in sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.</p> <p>The attendance team will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address frequent absence.</p>
<p><b>11. Lateness</b></p>	<p>The school regards punctuality to be of the utmost importance.</p> <p>The school day starts at <b>9:00am</b>. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time. We recommend that <b>pupils arrive at 8:50am</b> for a prompt 9am start.</p> <p>Registers are taken as follows throughout the school day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registers are marked at <b>9:00am</b>. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark (L).</li> <li>• The register closes at <b>9:30am</b>. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they arrive at school after this time (U).</li> <li>• If primary pupils arrive between <b>9:20-9:35</b>, they must wait until after Transcendental Meditation (TM) and Word of Wisdom (WoW) before entering the school site. This does not affect secondary phase pupils whose TM time is later in the morning.</li> <li>• After lunch, registers are marked at <b>1:00pm (primary) and 1:50pm (secondary)</b>. (On Fridays, secondary afternoon registers are taken at 1:10pm). The register closes at <b>1:05pm (primary) and 1:55pm</b></li> </ul>

	<p><b>(secondary)</b> (and at 1:15pm on Fridays at the secondary site). Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present, unless a previous message has been received that explains this absence</p> <p>Persistent lateness may result in a penalty notice.</p>
<p><b>12. Truancy</b></p>	<p>Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.</p> <p>All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.</p> <p>Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.</p> <p>Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the attendance team will be notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.</p> <p>The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.</li> <li>● If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.</li> <li>● A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>13. Missing children</b></p>	<p>Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:</p>

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All classrooms/workspaces
  - All toilets
  - All offices/staff rooms
  - Any outbuildings
  - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- A Cause for Concern form will be completed, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Enabling Good Behaviour Policy.

	<p>The headteacher will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.</p>
<p><b>14. Term-time leave</b></p>	<p>The school will expect parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed. Leave during term-time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and is decided by the headteacher. The DfE in its Guidance states that “parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid seeking permission from schools to take their children out of school during term time unless it is absolutely unavoidable.” The school will only consider authorising term-time leave if the circumstances are exceptional and unavoidable.</p> <p>Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis. Requests should be made at least 3 weeks in advance, where possible. Any requests made once the leave has been taken will automatically be unauthorised.</p> <p>Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a pupil’s attendance record shows any unauthorised absence</li> <li>• Where a pupil’s authorised absence record is already above 10 percent</li> </ul> <p>If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice issued by the County Council.</p> <p>If the school becomes aware that a child’s absence has been falsely reported, the absence will be unauthorised and the County Council will be informed.</p>
<p><b>15. Religious observances</b></p>	<p>The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals. Parents must inform the school at least 3 weeks in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance. The day(s) of absence</p>

	<p>must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong.</p>
<p><b>16. Appointments</b></p>	<p>As far as possible, parents are encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, evidence of the appointment must be sent to the school office.</p> <p>If an appointment requires a pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office. Pupils will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.</p>
<p><b>17. Young carers</b></p>	<p>The school understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as monitoring and supporting them throughout their time at the school.</p> <p>The school will take a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.</p>
<p><b>18. Exceptional circumstances</b></p>	<p>Exceptional circumstances will include when a pupil is unable to attend because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Transport is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance (if this becomes a regular occurrence, it may be necessary to discuss a move to a school that is closer to home).</li> <li>● There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.</li> <li>● The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.</li> </ul> <p>The use of the 'Y' code for exceptional circumstances will be collected in the school census for statistical purposes.</p>
<p><b>19. Rewarding good attendance</b></p>	<p>Outstanding attendance is celebrated on a weekly basis via BISBOT (Be In School, Be On Time). Each week, the class with the best attendance at each phase receives our 'excellent attendance' trophy and is given an extra breaktime. In addition, one pupil from each phase is named the</p>

	<p>week's BISBOT champion and receives a certificate - the winners are drawn randomly from all of the pupils with 100% attendance for that week.</p> <p>Outstanding attendance is also celebrated at the end of each term, with every pupil with 100% attendance for that term receiving a certificate.</p>
<p><b>20. Monitoring and review</b></p>	<p>Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance targets are 95% (primary phase) and 93% (secondary phase).</p> <p>This policy will be reviewed every three years by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is October 2025.</p> <p>Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.</p>

## **Appendix A: Attendance Monitoring Procedures**

1. Attendance Percentage Alerts are sent daily from SchoolPod to the Attendance Team (LE/LW/LG/JH/Attendance Administrator).
2. Consecutive Absence Alerts are received as they occur.
3. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by the Attendance Team are highlighted and recorded.
4. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence where a reason for the absence is not given. Any N codes not established are recorded as unauthorised absences. If contact is not made by a parent, a text message is sent to



the parent, followed by a phone call if there is still no contact. A home visit may be made if it is not possible to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil.

5. If pupil attendance drops below 95%, a letter may be sent home outlining the school's concerns and suggestions for how parents can work with the school and their child to help improve attendance. An invitation will be offered for parents to contact the school if they have identified any issues that the school can offer support with.
6. If attendance drops below 93%, a phone call will be made by a member of the attendance team to discuss the absence and to reiterate the offers of support made in point 5.
7. If attendance falls below 90%, a letter will be sent home explaining that the pupil's absence is now being monitored. Attendance will be monitored for two weeks. If attendance has not improved (likely to be around 85% at this point), then parents will be required to attend a meeting in school (or online) with members of the Attendance Team. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or genuinely unable to attend, a home visit may be arranged. An Attendance Agreement may be implemented and/or a medical action plan meeting may be arranged between parents, the school nurse and the attendance team. Targets will be set for raising attendance. This will be monitored over a four-week period.
8. If the targets have been met after the four-week monitoring period, a letter will be sent home from the headteacher to congratulate the pupil and the family. Monitoring and communication with the family will continue until attendance stabilises. If the targets are not met, an application will be made for a penalty notice or prosecution.

## **Appendix B: Attendance agreement**

Child's name:	
DOB:	
Parent's name(s):	

Address(es):	
Tel:	

Senior staff member with overall responsibility:
Member of staff responsible day-to-day:
Contact number (and when is the best time to call?):

We are going to work together in making sure that the above named child improves their attendance at school over the next 4 weeks.

<b>Current attendance (%) and other information, including number of absences and what has been tried before:</b>
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<b>The specific targets of our plan. What we aim to do by (date):</b>
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**Achieving these targets**

**I/we (the parents) agree to:**  
(please detail)

**We (the school) agree to:**  
(please detail)

**Comments by the child/young person:**

**Agreeing to the contract:**

**Consent by parent(s)**

I/we have agreed to this Parenting Contract and will

- (a) work with the school as detailed above, to improve my/our child's school attendance, and
- (b) carry out what we have promised to do.

I/we also agree to information being shared with other professionals and agencies as required to help us.

**I/we understand that if my child has any unauthorised absences from school in the next 4 weeks, a Penalty Notice or prosecution may follow without further warning. This agreement may be given as part of the evidence.**

**Signed (Parent/s):**

**Signed (on behalf of the school/governing body)**

**Date:**

Copies to be circulated to all parties

