

THE MOUNT SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

2026–2027

Version	2.0
Policy writer	Euan Burton-Smith
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Approval	Approved by Chris Sellers – Director / Proprietor

This policy retains the structure and operational detail of The Mount School Attendance Policy 2025–2026 while updating the statutory framework, safeguarding links, attendance returns and School procedures.

1. Aims

- set high expectations for attendance and punctuality for all pupils;
- promote good attendance and explain its benefits for achievement, wellbeing and belonging;
- reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- act early to identify and address patterns of absence and lateness;
- build strong, respectful relationships with families and remove barriers to attendance;
- recognise that absence can be a symptom of safeguarding, SEND, health, family or other difficulties; and
- work effectively with the local authority and other partners where support or statutory intervention is required.

The School will promote and support punctuality in attending School and lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy has regard to the DfE statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance, updated 9 July 2026. That guidance expressly applies to independent schools.

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996;
- relevant provisions of the Education Act 2002 and Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, and the national penalty-notice framework;
- the Children and Families Act 2014 where SEND/EHC plan duties are relevant;
- the Equality Act 2010;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools; and
- DfE guidance on children who cannot attend school because of health needs.

The previous policy listed the 2006 Pupil Registration Regulations and their amendments alongside the 2024 Regulations. The operative registration framework is now the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, so the superseded list has been removed.

Independent schools are not required to submit daily attendance data to the DfE. From the 2026–2027 academic year independent schools may voluntarily share daily attendance data with the DfE. Any participation by The Mount will be separately authorised and reflected in privacy information.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Director / Proprietor

- set high expectations for leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers;
- ensure leaders fulfil statutory registration, attendance and safeguarding duties;
- recognise and promote attendance across School policies and ethos;
- ensure attendance processes are effective and support is prioritised for pupils who need it most;
- regularly review and challenge attendance data, including persistent/severe absence and vulnerable groups;
- ensure staff receive appropriate attendance training;
- ensure the School works with local partners to remove barriers and shares required information; and
- hold the Headteacher to account for implementation and impact.

3.2 Headteacher / designated senior leader for attendance

The Headteacher, Euan Burton-Smith, is the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and may be contacted through the School on 01484 426432 or euan.burton-smith@themount.org.uk.

- lead, champion and improve attendance across the School;
- implement this policy and establish consistent systems;

- monitor whole-School and individual attendance and report to the Director;
- authorise absence where the Regulations permit;
- ensure correct attendance codes are used;
- work with pupils and families to understand and remove barriers;
- work with the SENDCO and parents where SEND or health needs affect attendance;
- inform the local authority where an EHC plan pupil's attendance falls or barriers relate to the pupil's needs;
- ensure required admission, attendance and sickness returns are made to the local authority;
- ensure safeguarding concerns arising from absence are referred to the DSL process;
- liaise with the local authority regarding legal intervention, including penalty notices where appropriate; and
- evaluate the impact of attendance strategies.

3.3 Form teachers

Form teachers record attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions each day using the correct national codes and submit the register by 09:00 and 13:35 respectively. Any uncertainty about a pupil's whereabouts or reason for absence must be raised promptly with the School office.

3.4 School administration staff

- receive and record absence notifications;
- follow up unexplained absence promptly;
- maintain accurate admission and attendance records;
- escalate safeguarding or attendance concerns to the Headteacher/DSL;
- support statutory returns and attendance reporting.

3.5 Parents/carers

- ensure their child attends every day and on time;
- report absence before 09:00 on the first day and each subsequent day unless another arrangement has been agreed;
- give the reason for absence and expected return date;
- provide more than one current emergency contact wherever possible;
- arrange appointments outside School hours where possible;
- engage with support and attendance plans; and
- keep the School informed of circumstances affecting attendance.

3.6 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend every day and on time and to speak to a trusted adult where something is making attendance difficult.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

The School keeps an electronic admission register and attendance register. Attendance is taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Each pupil is recorded using the national attendance and absence codes prescribed by the 2024 Regulations.

- present;
- attending an approved educational activity;
- absent; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to an attendance entry will preserve the original entry and record the amended entry, reason, date and the name/position of the person making the amendment.

Attendance-register entries will be retained for six years from the date of the entry.

The School day starts at 09:00 and ends at 15:40. Pupils should arrive by 08:50.

4.2 Lateness and register closing

A pupil arriving after the register is taken but before it closes will be marked late using code L. A pupil arriving after the register has closed without an authorised reason will be recorded using code U for the relevant session.

The School will publish and apply a consistent register-closing time. Persistent lateness will be treated as an attendance concern and may also indicate a safeguarding or family-support need.

4.3 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the School before 09:00 on the first day of an unplanned absence by telephoning 01484 426432 or emailing info@themount.org.uk, or via the Compass App and update the School on subsequent days unless another arrangement has been agreed.

Physical or mental illness will normally be authorised. The School will not routinely request medical evidence. Evidence may be sought where necessary and proportionate, for example where there are genuine doubts, repeated absence or support/planning requires clarification.

The previous automatic trigger of requesting medical evidence whenever illness exceeded five days is removed. Current attendance guidance emphasises that schools should not request medical evidence unnecessarily.

4.4 Planned absence and appointments

Parents should arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside School hours where possible. Where this is not possible, absence for the minimum necessary time may be authorised and evidence may be requested where appropriate.

Other leave requests should be made as far in advance as possible using the School's leave-of-absence process.

4.5 First-day response to unexplained absence

Where a pupil expected to attend does not arrive and no satisfactory reason is known, the School will make contact on the morning of the first day. If contact is not established, staff will use the pupil's emergency contacts and consider the child's individual safeguarding risk.

The response will not be governed by a fixed number of unanswered calls. Where there is reason to believe a child may be at immediate risk, the School will escalate without delay to the DSL, children's social care and/or police as appropriate.

Contact will continue on subsequent unexplained-absence days. The reason and correct attendance code will be established as soon as possible and no later than the period permitted by the 2024 Regulations.

4.6 Reporting attendance to parents

Parents/carers will receive regular information about their child's attendance and punctuality. Where attendance is declining, the School will communicate early rather than waiting for a fixed threshold.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Leave of absence

The Headteacher will only grant leave during term time where permitted by the 2024 Regulations. Leave for exceptional circumstances is discretionary and will be considered individually, including the specific facts, circumstances and background.

- participation in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad;
- attending an interview;
- study leave where applicable;
- a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable where properly agreed and recorded; and
- exceptional circumstances.

Family holidays will not normally constitute exceptional circumstances. Leave will not be granted for protest activity during School hours.

Other authorised circumstances include illness, necessary medical/dental appointments, qualifying religious observance and circumstances relating to travelling for occupational purposes where the statutory code applies.

5.2 Approved educational activity and other non-absence codes

Where a pupil is away from the School site but attending another school, approved educational activity, local-authority provision, an educational visit or another circumstance covered by the Regulations, the appropriate attendance code will be used rather than treating the pupil as absent.

5.3 Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. A temporary part-time timetable will be used only in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests, forms part of a plan to return to full-time education, has clear review dates and end date, and is agreed with parents/carers and relevant professionals.

A part-time timetable will not be used to manage behaviour, avoid suspension, compensate for insufficient support or operate as an open-ended arrangement. The School will consider SEND, Equality Act, safeguarding and local-authority duties and will record the rationale, hours, coding, education provided and reviews.

5.4 Remote or hybrid education

Remote or hybrid learning is not a substitute for school attendance and will not be used informally to mask absence. Where education away from site is arranged, the School will ensure the correct statutory attendance code is used and that the arrangement has a clear educational, safeguarding and legal basis.

6. Local-authority returns and children missing education

6.1 Admission and deletion returns

The School will make admission and deletion returns to the local authority in accordance with the 2024 Regulations, including required notifications when a compulsory-school-age pupil is added to or removed from the admission register outside normal transition arrangements.

A pupil will never be removed from roll simply because they have stopped attending. Deletion will occur only where a statutory ground applies and required enquiries/notifications have been completed.

6.2 Attendance returns – irregular attendance and ten-day trigger

The School will make attendance returns to the local authority at the intervals agreed with the authority. The return includes compulsory-school-age pupils who have failed to attend regularly and pupils absent continuously for at least ten school days where the absence is recorded exclusively using one or more of codes G, N, O or U.

This corrects the previous policy wording, which described the ten-day requirement simply as 'unauthorised absence'. The statutory ten-day return is tied to the specified attendance codes, while the separate duty to report pupils who fail to attend regularly is broader.

6.3 Sickness returns

The School will make a sickness return where it has reasonable grounds to believe a compulsory-school-age pupil recorded with code I will be unable to attend because of sickness for at least 15 consecutive school days or the relevant cumulative statutory period.

6.4 Children missing education and withdrawal

Unexplained withdrawal, inability to establish a child's whereabouts, repeated/prolonged absence or a parent indicating an intention to home educate may create safeguarding and children-missing-education issues. The School will follow statutory registration requirements, local CME procedures and the Safeguarding Policy.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 introduces significant reforms concerning children not in school and school attendance orders. The School will implement provisions that apply to it as and when they are commenced and supported by regulations/guidance; Royal Assent alone will not be treated as evidence that every new procedure is already in force.

7. Safeguarding and attendance

Attendance is a safeguarding issue. Absence can be both a symptom and a cause of wider harm. Staff will consider attendance information alongside safeguarding, behaviour, SEND, health and family information.

- repeated or prolonged unexplained absence;
- sudden deterioration in attendance;
- persistent lateness or unusual patterns;
- absence following a safeguarding disclosure or incident;
- missing episodes or unexplained travel;
- possible criminal/sexual exploitation or county lines;
- domestic abuse, neglect or unsafe home conditions;
- mental-health difficulties, self-harm or suicidal risk;
- young-carer responsibilities;
- bullying, child-on-child abuse or fear of attending;
- SEND or unmet medical needs;
- repeated suspension or a part-time timetable; and
- unexplained withdrawal or proposed home education in a safeguarding context.

Where attendance information creates a safeguarding concern, staff must report it to the DSL immediately and must not wait for attendance interventions to fail first.

Where a pupil is already open to children's social care, has a child protection plan, is looked after or is otherwise known to agencies, attendance concerns will be shared with the relevant professional promptly and in accordance with the child's plan.

8. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to School

8.1 Complex barriers to attendance

- listen to the pupil and family and identify the underlying barriers;
- agree specific, achievable actions and review dates;
- provide pastoral support or a trusted adult;
- consider practical barriers such as transport, routines, finance or family circumstances;
- involve Family Help, health, social care or other agencies where appropriate; and
- maintain empathetic but clear communication about the importance of attendance.

8.2 Mental or physical ill health and SEND

The School will work closely with families, SENDCO and relevant professionals. Support may include reasonable adjustments, changes to the learning environment, access to quiet spaces, pastoral support, health plans, phased reintegration or other individually appropriate measures.

Support will not automatically mean reducing attendance. Any part-time timetable must comply with section 5.3. Remote education will be used only where appropriate and must not become an unreviewed alternative to attendance.

Where a pupil has an EHC plan and attendance falls or barriers relate to the pupil's needs, the School will inform and work with the local authority.

8.3 Return after lengthy or unavoidable absence

- a personalised reintegration plan where needed;
- a trusted adult and regular check-ins;
- reasonable adjustments for health/SEND;
- targeted academic catch-up without overwhelming the pupil;
- support to rebuild peer relationships and confidence; and
- regular review with the pupil, family and relevant professionals.

9. Strategies for promoting attendance

The School will promote attendance through a positive whole-School culture, clear expectations, curriculum engagement, pastoral care, early family communication and recognition of improvement.

Attendance was celebrated in whole-School assembly each week. The School may continue to recognise good or improving attendance, but rewards will be designed carefully so that children are not shamed or unfairly disadvantaged for disability, illness, medical treatment, religious observance or other absence outside their control.

The School or local authority may use attendance contracts and other voluntary support arrangements where appropriate.

10. Attendance monitoring and data

10.1 Routine monitoring

The School will monitor attendance and punctuality at individual, year-group, cohort and whole-School level. Leaders will review data frequently enough to identify emerging concerns early.

Data will be considered by relevant groups, including SEND, disadvantaged pupils, EAL and children known to safeguarding services, while avoiding simplistic conclusions from small cohorts.

10.2 Persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of possible sessions. Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more. These thresholds support analysis but do not replace earlier intervention where an individual pattern causes concern.

- identify pupils at risk before they reach persistent absence;
- understand barriers through discussion with pupil and family;
- cross-reference safeguarding and SEND information;
- agree support and review its impact;
- involve wider services/local authority where needed; and
- consider legal intervention only where support is not appropriate, has not worked or has not been engaged with.

10.3 DfE data

The 2025 policy stated that School attendance data would be collected each term and published alongside national statistics. As an independent school, The Mount is not required to submit daily attendance data to DfE. From 2026–2027 it may opt into voluntary daily sharing; the policy therefore no longer promises routine DfE collection/publication that may not apply.

11. Attendance support and legal intervention

The School's approach is support first. Legal intervention is considered where support is not appropriate, has not succeeded or parents have not engaged and statutory criteria are met.

11.1 Penalty notices

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Reaching the threshold does not make a penalty notice automatic; the individual case, support, Equality Act duties and local-authority code of conduct must be considered.

The School will normally work with Kirklees Council on penalty-notice action. The Headteacher will not describe the School as independently 'fining' parents; payment and prosecution decisions sit within the statutory/local-authority framework.

Penalty amounts and escalation rules will follow the current national framework rather than being hard-coded into this policy where they may change. Parents will be given the current amount and payment information if a notice is contemplated or issued.

11.2 Notice to improve

Where the national threshold is met and support is appropriate but not engaged with, a notice to improve may be used in accordance with the local code of conduct. It will set out attendance concerns, support offered, required improvement, the review period and the consequences of insufficient improvement.

11.3 Other legal routes

Where necessary, the School will cooperate with the local authority regarding prosecution, education supervision orders, school attendance orders or other statutory measures available under current law.

12. Monitoring arrangements

The Headteacher will review implementation and attendance patterns throughout the year. The Director will receive attendance information and provide challenge and oversight.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where registration regulations, statutory attendance guidance, KCSIE, local-authority procedures or relevant provisions of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 change.

Inspection readiness will include accurate registers, evidence of first-day response, attendance analysis, support/reintegration plans, SEND and safeguarding links, local-authority returns and evidence that leaders understand individual cases rather than relying solely on percentages.

Appendix 1 – National attendance codes

The School will use the national attendance and absence codes prescribed by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current DfE guidance. Because the statutory code set and explanatory guidance can be amended, the School's MIS code list/current DfE table is the controlling operational reference.

Common code	Meaning	Mount operational note
/ and \	Present	Use for morning/afternoon present sessions as configured by MIS.
L	Late before register closes	Pupil is present; punctuality concern may still require follow-up.
U	Late after register closes	Recorded absent for the session unless another code applies.
I	Unable to attend because of sickness	Includes physical or mental illness where criteria met.
M	Medical/dental appointment	Use for necessary appointment absence under current coding rules.
G	Holiday without leave	One of the codes relevant to the continuous 10-school-day attendance return.
N	Circumstances not yet established	Temporary code; reason must be established and code amended within statutory timescale.
O	Absent in other/unknown circumstances	Unauthorised absence where no more specific code applies.
C/C1/C2	Leave / regulated performance or employment / part-time timetable	Use only where the precise statutory circumstances for the relevant code are met.
K	Education provision arranged by the local authority	Use where statutory definition is met.
B	Approved educational activity	Use only where activity and supervision requirements are met.
D	Dual registered at another school	Use where pupil is registered at more than one school and required to attend the other school.
R	Religious observance	Use only for qualifying day set apart by the religious body.
T	Travelling for occupational purposes	Use only where statutory conditions are met.

Y codes	Unable to attend because of specified exceptional circumstances	Use the precise Y sub-code required by current Regulations/MIS.
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Staff must not guess a code. Where uncertain, the office/attendance lead will check the current DfE code table and the 2024 Regulations.

Appendix 2 – First-day absence and safeguarding response

- 1. Register completed promptly. Identify every pupil expected but not present.
- 2. Check for known message, appointment, authorised activity or known alternative provision.
- 3. Contact parent/carer on the morning of the first unexplained absence.
- 4. If no response, use additional emergency contacts and consider known safeguarding/SEND/health risks.
- 5. If risk is elevated, alert DSL immediately; do not wait for repeated unsuccessful calls.
- 6. Consider welfare check, children's social care or police where circumstances justify this.
- 7. Continue contact on subsequent unexplained-absence days and record actions.
- 8. Correct the attendance code when the reason is established.
- 9. Consider patterns: previous absence, lateness, siblings, exploitation, domestic abuse, bullying, mental health, SEND, transport and family circumstances.
- 10. Escalate to attendance support/local authority and safeguarding routes as required.