



MEPA TRAINING

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

THIS POLICY IS WRITTEN FOR AND APPLIED TO MEPA STUDIOS, MEPA ACADEMY AND MEPA COLLEGE.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	3
Senior Leadership Responsibility	3
<i>Attendance Principles</i>	3
<i>Aims</i>	3
<i>TARGETS</i>	4
<i>Parental/Student Responsibility</i>	4
<i>The Role of MEPA Training Staff</i>	4
<i>Incorrectly recorded registration marks</i>	5
<i>Procedure for monitoring attendance</i>	5
MEPA College – PROCESS FOR STUDENTS OVER 18 YEARS OLD.....	6
<i>Children Missing Education</i>	6
<i>Lateness</i>	7
MEPA Academy.....	7
MEPA College.....	7
<i>Authorising Absence</i>	7
<i>New Pupil</i>	8
<i>Leave of Absence/Holiday</i>	8
<i>Pupils unwell during TRAINING time</i>	9
<i>Attending Open Auditions and Agent Meetings</i>	10
<i>(Year 11 & Year THREE students only)</i>	10
<i>Attendance Codes</i>	10
<i>APPENDIX 1 – Attendance Letter 1</i>	12
<i>APPENDIX 2 – Attendance Letter 2</i>	13
<i>APPENDIX 3 – Attendance Letter 3</i>	14
<i>APPENDIX 4 – Attendance Letter 4</i>	15

INTRODUCTION

Providing a student experience of the highest possible quality is something that MEPA Training takes very seriously. Promoting and encouraging student engagement with all aspects of their learning experience is a key aspect of this, and it is vital that all students at MEPA Training attend all their timetabled sessions, unless absence is unavoidable, to gain the greatest benefit from their education and training.

This policy has been developed as part of MEPA Training's overall Student Attendance & Engagement Strategy which aims to provide a supportive learning environment of which student attendance is one aspect of overall engagement.

MEPA Training monitors the attendance of students at timetabled teaching sessions for the following reasons:

- a) To aid the retention of students by allowing early identification of those students at risk and allow timely interventions to be made in terms of academic and pastoral support
- b) To enable notifications of withdrawals/suspension to be made on time so that external stakeholders, (e.g., SCL Funding, CDMT, Trinity College London) are informed in a timely manner.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY

Lewis Muir – Senior Management – LMuir@mepatraining.com

ATTENDANCE PRINCIPLES

- All schools seek to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.
- MEPA Training will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of MEPA Training community feels wanted and secure.
- All Academy staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends Academy regularly and punctually.
- MEPA Training will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- To meet these objectives, MEPA Training will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents/carers, and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice, and support.

MEPA Training is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

The principal and staff, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at MEPA Training.

AIMS

- MEPA Training aims to promote, among parents and children, a high level of awareness of the need for regular and prompt attendance to establish a routine for life.
- Parents are advised of the school's expectations during the induction meetings for new children.

TARGETS

Our attendance target is 95% because we recognise that good attendance is imperative to academic, social and personal success, we have set an ambitious, but realistic target and any attendance below that will incur a level of intervention to support pupils and families.

PARENTAL/STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Students under 18 years old (Academy)

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school/college regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child, and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour. It is the parents' responsibility to contact MEPA Training every day that their child is absent.

Students over 18 years old or college students at 16 years old

Students over the age of 18 have a contractual obligation as part of their study programme and funding to attend school/college regularly and arrive on time.

Reporting an absence

The following lines of communication can be used to report absence: Telephone: 01622 756644 to report absence. This option is available at any time, day or night. A message should be left stating the pupil's name, year group, name of caller and reason for absence alternatively an email can be sent to reception@mepatraining.com This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe. We require a call daily to confirm your child's absence and to ensure their safety.

Medical Absences/Certificates

If a student is away for 5 or more consecutive days, a medical certificate must be provided to reception, upon their return. Students who have been absent from school/college for a long period due to illness or an injury, must arrange to meet the Principal and/or SMT upon their return and prior to restarting a full timetable. In this meeting, the school/college will assess the student and may also suggest they see the Physiotherapist or Welfare Officer to inform them whether they are able to participate in full physical activities.

Medical Sign Off

If a student is 'signed off' from Academy/College by the Physiotherapist, they will inform both the student and the relevant staff of the length of time the student has been signed off for. If a student would prefer to use an outside physiotherapist they must provide documentation of the injury and the time they have been signed off for.

Should the student remain absent beyond the date agreed with the Physiotherapist, the student must email or telephone reception at reception@mepatraining.com or 01622 756644 before 09.00am on each of the subsequent days they will be absent.

THE ROLE OF MEPA TRAINING STAFF

At MEPA Training there is a whole organisation responsibility to oversee attendance.

Class teachers are expected to complete a register within the first 10 minutes of each lesson throughout MEPA Training day and update the register to show any late arrivals to the lesson after the register has been taken. The registers taken first thing in the morning and again in the afternoon after lunch time, are the registration marks that will be shown on a registration certificate. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late.

INCORRECTLY RECORDED REGISTRATION MARKS

If a child has been marked present in a class incorrectly, vice versa, or the register has not been updated to show late arrivals to the lesson, the class teacher will be held to account.

It is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by text, followed by a phone call if no reason has been provided by the afternoon registration.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence. If no reason for absence has been provided within 2 weeks of sending the letter, the absence will be recorded as unauthorized.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
-

It is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team to ensure:

- Absence trends are identified, including sibling patterns.
- Relevant staff are made aware of any issues affecting pupil's attendance, providing it is appropriate to do so. Confidential Information provided by parents/carers and pupils will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
- Persistent Absentees are identified, and contact is made with parents/carers via telephone and meetings.
- Sign posting families to relevant agencies for support.
- Relevant referrals are made for attendance concerns where all other avenues of support have been exhausted.

PROCEDURE FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Each pupil is expected to achieve at least 95% attendance whilst on roll at MEPA Training. We aim to achieve a whole Academy and College attendance percentage of 95% by the end of each academic year. Academy and College attendance figures are kept separately.

- 95% to 91% Attendance – continuous monitoring will be conducted by the Attendance Officer. Letter 1 (Appendix 1) will be sent to parent.
- 90% to 86% Attendance - continuous monitoring will be conducted by the Attendance Officer and meeting request with parents will take place. Letter 2 (Appendix 2) will be sent to parent.
- 85% to 81% Attendance - continuous monitoring will be conducted by the Attendance Officer and meeting request with parents will take place with notice that a Penalty Notice will take place if attendance does not improve. Letter 3 (Appendix 3) will be sent to parent.
- 80% or below Attendance – a penalty notice will be requested.

MEPA COLLEGE – PROCESS FOR STUDENTS OVER 18 YEARS OLD

We have a responsibility to ALL our students to ensure they get the most out of their training and development at college. Students who are regularly absent or late will, therefore, be subject to the following disciplinary stages.

Pre-Stage: Informal Verbal Warning

- Informal verbal warnings will be given to students by a member of the Management Team when they become concerned about a student's absenteeism and when their attendance falls below 95%. Such verbal warnings are recorded, and students are expected to show immediate improvement in their attendance.

Stage 1: Informal Written Warning

- When a student's attendance becomes more of a concern and/or falls below 90% they will be contacted informally by either the Principal or the Vice Principal. Via an email response or in a face-to-face meeting, the student will be expected to explain the reasons for their absenteeism and to self-identify targets and strategies to initiate an immediate improvement in their attendance.

Stage 2: First Formal Written Warning

- Should a student's attendance fail to improve following their Stage 1 Warning and/or fall below 85%, they will receive a First Formal Written Warning via email, outlining the expectations of the Management Team at the College. Students will be expected to respond to the email and to explain why their attendance has failed to improve since their Stage 1 Warning. Targets from the Principal and / or Vice Principal may be set at this Stage.

Stage 3: Second Formal Written Warning

- Should attendance fail to improve following their Stage 2 Warning and/or fall below 80%, students will be asked to meet with the Principal and Vice Principal to explain why their attendance has failed to improve since their Stage 2 Warning. Attendance targets will be set, and students will be removed from upcoming performances.

Stage 4: Third and Final Formal Written Warning

- Should attendance fail to improve following their Stage 3 Warning and/or fall below 75%, students will be asked to attend a meeting with the Principal and Vice Principal. A Third and Final Written Warning will be given to the student, and further targets will be set, including a challenging attendance target for the following 10 days of classes. Students will also be removed from all performances for that term and will be asked to attend extra workshops in the holidays.

Stage 5: Formal Withdrawal from Programme

Any student who does not meet the requirements of the Third and Final Written Warning will be Formally Withdrawn from their Programme of Study at MEPA College. A letter informing the student of their immediate withdrawal will be provided in a meeting with the Principal and Vice Principal

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

A child will not be removed from MEPA Training roll without consultation between the Senior Management Team and the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate.

LATENESS

MEPA Training opens the doors to pupils at 8:00am, should they wish to arrive early.

Persistent Lateness is tracked and monitored carefully by members of the Management Team. When patterns of lateness have been identified by members of the Management Team, students will be asked to attend a meeting with the Principal and/or Vice Principal to discuss strategies and to set targets to improve their punctuality. Students who fail to demonstrate an improvement will be subject to disciplinary action.

MEPA ACADEMY

Academy students are expected to arrive by 8:40am in preparation for tutor time at 8:40. All pupils that arrive late must report to reception where they will be signed in. Morning registers close at 9am. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L'). Regular lateness to Academy will be addressed by the relevant tutor. A letter to be sent home for 95% or less days lateness.

MEPA COLLEGE

College students are expected to arrive in time for a 9:00am start. All pupils that arrive late must report to reception/class teacher where they will be signed in. Morning registers close at 9:10am. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L'). Regular lateness to College will be addressed by Senior Management. A letter to be sent home for 95% or less days lateness.

AUTHORISING ABSENCE

Absence is not normally allowed for any reason other than medical or serious personal reasons (e.g. family bereavement).

Only the Senior Management Team can authorise absence using a consistent approach. **The Senior Management Team is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence.** If absences are not authorised, parents/carers will be notified. MEPA Training follow the guidelines for absence as stated in the Department of Health and NHS guidelines for school/college attendance and illness and would encourage parents/carers to do the same.

Long-term medical conditions need to be reviewed and monitored with evidence (either a letter from a consultant doctor or photocopy of medical prescriptions) where appropriate. Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between parents/carers and the school.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised. The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Absence if a parent/carer is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over term dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons

- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays
- Car broken down

If a student has a medical appointment, the student must email proof of the appointment to reception@mepatraining.com

Students/parents should make every effort to arrange medical appointments at the beginning or end of the day or during free periods to avoid major disruption to their lessons. If it is only possible to get a medical appointment during class time, students should inform the Academy/College BEFORE the event otherwise the absence will not be authorised.

Students should also consider the Assessment / Rehearsal / Performance Schedule when booking time off. Students can only miss an assessment if they qualify for 'extenuating circumstances'. Please note that requests to attend Weddings, Birthdays and other Special Occasions will not be considered as Authorised Absence, and attendance of such events will have a negative impact on your attendance percentage.

Students who have met with the Principal or Vice Principal and have subsequently been granted authorised absence for a specific length of time, will still need to email in the details to reception@mepatraining.com. Please note an absence not notified is recorded as an unauthorised attendance.

NEW PUPIL

If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, this will be addressed during the Pre-admission meeting.

STUDENTS IN RECEIPT OF FUNDING

Students in receipt of funding / scholarships from the academy/college, please note that your continued receipt of funding is conditional on satisfactory attendance of classes as well as appropriate behaviour at the Academy/College and progression in your studies. Students who fail to meet these conditions may have their funding / scholarship support withdrawn by the Academy/College, in accordance with the scholarship / discount agreement.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE/HOLIDAY

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Senior Managements ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school/college unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (MEPA Training has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport in law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Senior Management may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances”, but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Senior Management Team, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Senior Managements decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with Academy holidays.
- Where an absence from Academy is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child’s rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of an immediate member of the family.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil’s previous record of attendance into account when MEPA Training is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining ‘exceptional’ are rare, significant, unavoidable, and short. And by ‘unavoidable’ it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that the Senior Management Team can agree on the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Parents/Carers are requested to submit requests for leave of absence/holidays during term time to the Senior Management Team. The Senior Management Team will then respond in writing with their decision to authorise or unauthorised absence.

Holidays during term time will be recorded as unauthorised and could lead to a penalty notice being issued.

PUPILS UNWELL DURING TRAINING TIME

If a pupil becomes unwell during MEPA Training day they will be escorted to the medical department. The medical procedure will then be followed as stated in the Pupil Illness and Medication policy. (Please see appendix 8). We will make every effort to keep the pupil in school, whilst ensuring they are monitored, and it is safe to do so.

Parents/Carers will be contacted via telephone to explain the ailment and what measures have been taken to address this. If the child is too unwell to stay in school, after procedures have been followed as stated in the Pupil Illness and Medication Policy, parents will be asked to come to MEPA Training to collect their child to take them home. This supports MEPA Training’s safeguarding procedures. If the child presents as unwell in the morning before school, we request that parents follow the Department for Health’s guidelines on Academy/College attendance before deciding whether to keep the child absent from Academy for the day.

If Parents/Carers are unsure whether the illness constitutes a day’s absence, they will need to telephone MEPA Training for advice. If parent/carers are aware their child may be unwell, but have decided to send them to school, they should contact MEPA Training so we can alert the relevant staff to closely monitor the pupil throughout the day. Should their condition deteriorate further, we will contact the parent/carers to advise you of the situation. If a pupil requires medication to be given in school, a Pupil Health Care Plan must be requested by the

parent/carer from the office (Appendix 8b), then complete and returned as soon as possible. Without this form completed, we are unable to issue any medication during Academy hours.

ATTENDING OPEN AUDITIONS AND AGENT MEETINGS (YEAR 11 & YEAR THREE STUDENTS ONLY)

Students wishing to attend Open, and Agency Auditions must email details of the audition and job details to reception@mepatraining.com with the relevant times. Any requests received less than 48 hours prior to the audition will not be authorised. Registers will be marked as positive if you follow the procedures above.

Please also note we will be doing spot checks on the following:

- Agent Meetings (Agents may be contacted to confirm meetings)
- Open Auditions (Open auditions may be visited/contacted to confirm attendance)

Adherence to these procedures is extremely important and failure to do so can cause unnecessary additional work for the Academy/College. Abuse of these systems and procedures will lead to disciplinary action.

ATTENDANCE CODES

Codes	Description
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Education off site (no Dual reg)
C	Exceptional circumstances
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
I	Illness
J1	Interview
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised Abs
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
#	School closed to pupils & staff

Y	Enforced closure Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Q	Non-compulsory school age absence
X	Pupil not on roll
Z	All should attend/No mark recorded
-	Absence - Performing / Undertaking regulated employment
C1	Part Time Timetable
C2	Transport Issues
Y1	Travel Disruption
Y2	Part of School Premise Closed
Y3	School Unexpected Closure
Y4	Pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y5	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y6	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Y7	

APPENDIX 1 – ATTENDANCE LETTER 1

Date

Dear

RE: (child name) Class/year group – Letter 1 Attendance Concern

I am writing with concern regarding (child name)'s attendance to school. We aspire for all students to have a 100% attendance. Currently (child name)'s attendance is XXX. This letter is automatically triggered as part of our Attendance policy when a student's attendance falls below 95%.

As each family's circumstances are different, we want to work with parents to provide the best education for every child. Pupil welfare and wellbeing are really important to us at [MEPA Academy/College](#), and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for students to experience a sense of belonging, success and fulfilment.

We will continue to support (child name)'s education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help address gaps in their learning due to absence. Over the next couple of months, we will continue to monitor (child name)'s attendance.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to get in touch via email at lmuir@mepatraining.com

Best wishes,

Lewis Muir
Senior Management

APPENDIX 2 – ATTENDANCE LETTER 2

Date

Dear

RE: (child name) Class/year group – Letter 2 Attendance Concern

I am writing with concern regarding (child name)'s attendance to school. We aspire for all students to have a 100% attendance. Currently (child name)'s attendance is XXX. This letter is automatically triggered as part of our Attendance policy when a student's attendance falls below 90%.

We want to continue supporting (child name)'s education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help address gaps in their learning due to absence. We are requesting yourself as the parent/carer of child name, and child name meet with myself to look at how we can best support child name increasing their attendance at [MEPA Academy/College](#).

Proposed Date and Time

Below is the proposed date and time of the parental meeting regarding (child name)'s attendance.

Date:

Time:

Location: Earl House, 27-29 Earl Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1PF

Please could you confirm your attendance to this meeting by emailing lmuir@mepatraining.com. If you are unable to attend the proposed date and time, please email with an alternative date and time suggestion.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes,

Lewis Muir
Senior Management

APPENDIX 3 – ATTENDANCE LETTER 3

Date

Dear

RE: (child name) Class/year group – Letter 3 Attendance Concern

I am writing with concern regarding (child name)'s attendance to school. We aspire for all students to have a 100% attendance. Currently (child name)'s attendance is XXX. This letter is automatically triggered as part of our Attendance policy when a student's attendance falls below 85%.

We want to continue supporting (child name)'s education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help address gaps in their learning due to absence. However, due to (child name)'s attendance not improving and falling below 85%, we will be requesting a Penalty Notice with Kent County Council.

In order to prevent this next step, we are requesting yourself as the parent/carer of child name, and child name meet with myself to look at how we can best support child name increasing their attendance at [MEPA Academy/College](#).

Proposed Date and Time

Below is the proposed date and time of the parental meeting regarding (child name)'s attendance.

Date:

Time:

Location: Earl House, 27-29 Earl Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1PF

Please could you confirm your attendance to this meeting by emailing lmuir@mepatraining.com. If you are unable to attend the proposed date and time, please email with an alternative date and time suggestion.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes,

Lewis Muir
Senior Management

APPENDIX 4 – ATTENDANCE LETTER 4

Date

Dear

RE: (child name) Class/year group – Penalty Notice

The Registers at xx 'school' show that your child has missed more than a day of school each week on average, without good reason, over the last half term. You, as parent, are legally responsible under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, for ensuring that your child attends school regularly. As such you are now being referred for a Penalty Notice under Sec. 444 of the Education Act (1996) for failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child(ren).

The Penalty Notice is being requested in line with the Code of Conduct administered by the Local Authority. If accepted, a warning letter will be sent, whereby a 15-day monitoring period would be set in order to give you an opportunity to improve your child's attendance and avoid a subsequent fine. Should your child have 5 or more sessions of unauthorised absence during the 15-day monitoring period, a Penalty Notice will be issued. Once issued, a PN incurs a fine of £60.00 rising to £120.00 per child if not paid within 21 days.

Please take steps to make sure your child gets to school on time every day, and to obtain a Medical Certificate if he/she is too ill to attend. Any other reason for absence should be discussed with the school and it is the School's decision whether to authorise any absence that is not covered by medical evidence.

We thank you for your support in ensuring that your child is not absent from school during term time.

Thank you for your continued support.

Your sincerely,

Mandy Ellen
Principal of MEPA Academy